Life of St. Aloysius Gonzaga

Miss Devlin

LIFE OF
ST. ALOYSIUS GONZAGA

St. Aloysius at Court.

G 579

LIFE OF ST. ALOYSIUS GONZAGA

PATRON OF CHRISTIAN YOUTH

BY

MAURICE MESCHLER S. J.

TRANSLATED BY A BENEDICTINE
OF THE PERPETUAL ADORATION

WITH THREE PICTURES

WITH THE APPROBATION OF HIS GRACE THE ARCHBISHOP OF FREIBURG AND HIS LORDSHIP THE BISHOP OF BIRMINGHAM

ALMA COLLEGE
060.97
LIBRARY
G589
Alma, California

B. HERDER
PUBLISHER TO THE HOLY APOSTOLIC SEE
LONDON, W. C. 1911 ST. LOUIS, MO.
FREIBURG IM BREISGAU

6881

Imprimatur

Friburgi Brisgoviæ, die 24 Aprilis 1911

✠ **Thomas,** Archiepp̃s

All rights reserved

Printed by B. Herder in Freiburg im Breisgau

TO

MARY IMMACULATE,

QUEEN OF VIRGIN SOULS,

this translation of the Life of one of her most faithful servants is offered in loving devotion.

"This poor little tribute I lay at thy feet,
O Virgin of virgins, O Mary most sweet.
Be thou my true guide on my pilgrimage here,
And stand at my side when death draweth near."
(Little Office of the Immaculate Conception.)

«What have I in heaven? And besides
thee what do I desire upon earth?
Thou art the God of my heart, and my
portion for ever.»

Ps. lxxii. 25 26.

PREFACE

TO THE THREE EDITIONS OF THE JUBILEE YEAR 1891.

On the evening of the 22nd of June 1591 a plain and simple coffin was lowered into the vault of the Church of the Annunziata in Rome. It bore the Name of Jesus, and the brief inscription: "Aloysius Gonzaga, scholastic of the Society of Jesus." But around this simple coffin were centred high expectations and great hopes, for it was the general opinion that the honours of beatification and canonisation would soon be awarded to the deceased.

The 21st of June 1691 came, and these hopes had been fully realised. The little Church of the Annunziata was no longer to be seen, but on its site stood the large Church of St. Ignatius with its many porticoes; and within, on the right-hand side immediately adjoining the sanctuary, a memorial chapel was being built, destined to surpass in splendour everything else in the church. Eight years later the chapel was completed, and dedicated to the "Blessed" Aloysius Gonzaga. In recognition of the fame of his many great miracles, the Head of the Church had raised his voice and, by declaring Aloysius "Blessed", had raised him to the altars of the church. His veneration was already wide-spread; but further and far higher distinctions were expected for him.

These expectations were realised. A century later, on the 21st of June 1791, there was to be seen upon the

altar of the same memorial chapel in the church of St. Ignatius a golden inscription, indicating that it was dedicated to the honour of "Saint" Aloysius. Aloysius had been canonised, and thus attained the highest honours in the Church on earth. But how strange! The sanctuary stood there in all its outward splendour, and yet a certain air of desolation hovered over it, as though its brilliancy were enveloped in a veil of mourning; for its former rightful guardians were no longer there, and the holy service was carried on by strangers. Aloysius' Order was scattered and proscribed. Only one or two of his brethren in religion knelt unrecognised at the altar, with tears in their eyes and deep sorrow in their hearts.

And again a century has rolled away — the third since the death of the Saint; a century full of revolutions in the world and in Rome, and full also of changes around the tomb in the Church of St. Ignatius. The old guardians have been recalled and again dispersed; glorious times came, but passed away only too quickly, and gave place to days of gloom and bitter grief. The Papal arms over the entrance to the Church of St. Ignatius have barely been able to maintain their right to the sanctuary, against the Piedmontese cross that has been erected over the gate of the Roman College. The 21st of June 1891 is now approaching [1], and in spite of this sad condition of affairs the Church is preparing to bestow new marks of honour on Aloysius. She loves her Saints, her great and glorious children, and cannot help thinking of them, praising their deeds, and instituting joyful festivals in their honour, even when she herself is bowed down by suffering and persecution. She did so in the Catacombs,

[1] The words of the above preface were written just before the commencement of the Aloysian jubilee year 1891.

and she continues to do so to-day. She hopes for nothing from the world, but for everything from God, through the intercession of her happy children in heaven.

In the lives of the Saints there is an inexhaustible source of divine strength, the blessing of Heaven upon their virtuous life on earth. St. Aloysius is a new proof of this. His example has always been a powerful magnet for the young, whether in secular or religious life, and it has continued to be so to this day; for Aloysius is to all, and at all times, a model of most solid virtue and holiness under its most attractive aspect.

A new history of this Saint may therefore seem not ill-timed. It is true that there are no new incidents of his life to relate; for the oldest of his biographers, such as Cepari [1] and Piatti [2], as well as Manzini [3] and Maineri [4], and later on the more recent process of his canonisation [5], tell us about all that can now be told of Aloysius. The present biography has of course also been drawn from these sources. But care has been taken to weave into the narrative more of the letters and other writings of St. Aloysius than was hitherto possible; for nothing better describes a man and a saint than his own words. It was a happy chance that O. Jozzi published just before this little work was written the most complete collection of these letters that has yet appeared [6]. The completeness and vividness of the narrative is enhanced by the introduction of details

[1] An excellent edition of Cepari is Fr. *Goldie's* translation from the German version of Fr. *Schröder*, Einsiedeln 1891, Benziger.

[2] Bolland., Acta Sanctorum Junii IV, anno apice 1707, 896—911.

[3] *Manzini*, Vita e miracoli di B. Luigi Gonzaga, Brescia 1701.

[4] *Maineri*, Vita di S. Luigi Gonzaga, Prato 1885.

[5] Bolland., Acta Sanctorum Junii IV, anno apice 1707.

[6] Lettere di S. Luigi Gonzaga con annotazioni del Sac. *Olivero Jozzi*, Pisa 1889, Ungher.

of the history and customs of the period, in so far as they serve as a background to the life of the Saint. Many of these details help us to understand and appreciate him better. Although every care has been taken to recount nothing that is not well authenticated and able to stand the test of criticism, still the author's main object in penning this biography was not to write a scientific work on St. Aloysius, but to provide young readers with a practical and edifying book. For this reason a little instruction and meditation has been introduced at suitable points.

One of the special features of the Feast of St. Aloysius in Rome is the abundance and beauty of the floral gifts that adorn his altar on that day. May the following pages also be laid at his feet as a modest little bouquet on the occasion of the tercentenary of his death, — a bouquet of humble heather from the land of exile, affectionately dedicated to the dear young folk of Germany, their instructors, and their glorious protector, St. Aloysius Gonzaga!

Blyenbeck (in Holland), Feast of All Saints, 1890.

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

The kind and indulgent reception accorded to the English translation of Father Meschler's «Life of Our Lord Jesus Christ» has emboldened me to offer to the English reading public his «Life of St. Aloysius». I have again to thank my sisters in religion for assistance in the labour of translation, and also the Rev. F. E. Ross for kindly revising the work. With the consent of the author and the kind permission of the Rev. F. Goldie S. J., two extracts — the Chronological Table of the principal events of the Saint's life and the list of his English contemporaries at the Roman College — have been taken from the English version of Fr. Schröder's «Life of St. Aloysius», edited by Fr. Goldie (Einsiedeln 1891, Benziger), and added to the present work. It is hoped that these details may serve to enhance its interest for English readers, and that it may meet with the same friendly welcome from them as it has found in Germany (where it has already reached the 10th edition), France, and Spain.

Princethorpe, Feast of the Annunciation, March 25th 1911.

CONTENTS.

	Page
Preface to the three Editions of the Jubilee Year 1891	IX
Translator's Preface	XIII
Introduction	XVII

PART I.

THE SAINT IN THE WORLD.

1. The Ancestry, Birth, and Early Life of the Saint (Castiglione 1568—1572)	1
2. In the Tabernacles of Sinners (Casale 1572—1573)	11
3. The Conversion (Castiglione 1573—1577)	18
4. The Cradle of Holiness (Florence 1577—1580)	21
5. A Ray of Sunshine in the Mantuan Winter (Mantua 1579—1580)	37
6. The Twofold Source of the Spiritual Life (Castiglione 1580)	41
7. A Step Onwards (Casale, at the end of summer, 1580)	48
8. The Victim in the Briars of Mortification (Castiglione 1581)	55
9. At the Court of Madrid (1581—1584)	64
10. The Choice of a Vocation (Madrid 1583)	76
11. The First Storm	81
12. A Journey beset with Temptations (Italy 1584)	86
13. Fresh Combats and a Victory (Castiglione 1584)	90
14. A Truce, but not a Peace (Milan 1584—1585)	97
15. The Last Contest (Mantua and Castiglione 1585)	104
16. The Renunciation (Mantua 1585)	111
17. In Exitu Israel de Ægypto (Loretto and Rome)	117

PART II.

THE SAINT IN RELIGION.

1. The New Home	125
2. Complete Detachment (Sant' Andrea 1585—1586)	130

Page

3. Dead to the Senses 137
4. Love of Humiliation 141
5. At the Gesù 143
6. At Sant' Andrea again. Aloysius' Life of Prayer (1586) 147
7. A Neapolitan Winter (1586—1587) 158
8. The Student of Secular and Religious Learning (Rome 1587—1589) 163
9. The Master in the Science of the Saints. Humility . 168
10. The Pure Gold of Obedience 175
11. The Lover of Poverty 178
12. The Master in Mortification 181
13. The Summit of Perfection — Love 185
14. The Dove with the Olive-branch (Castiglione and Mantua 1589) 189
15. A Painful Task 202
16. Heaven in sight (Milan 1590) 211
17. Homeward Bound (Rome 1590—1591) . . . 220
18. Veni, Domine Jesu! (1591) 238
19. Ecce venio 252

PART III.

THE SAINT IN HEAVEN.

1. The Mortal Remains of the Departed Spirit . . 257
2. The Great Thaumaturgus 262
3. Beloved by God and Men 272
4. A Character Portrait 289
5. The Glory of Youth 296
6. The Mirror of Princes 305
7. The Lover of the Pearl of Great Price . . . 314
8. Conclusion 320
Chronology of the Life of St. Aloysius 331
His English Contemporaries at the Roman College . . 335
Index 337

PICTURES.

St. Aloysius at Court . . . . . Frontispiece
First Communion of St. Aloysius 44
St. Aloysius in Religion 184

INTRODUCTION.

We have often heard it regretted that the *Lives*, and even the character, of St. Aloysius Gonzaga exercise less influence among us, and prove less attractive (especially to English boys), than might have been expected from the unique position the Saint has held in Catholic devotion.

This may be due in large measure to the unfortunate tendency of modern iconography to soften his extremely marked features into a conventional regularity, and to impart to his representations a languishing air wholly out of keeping with his ardent and masculine personality.

It may also be partly due to the unconscious reproduction, in our English *Lives*, of the foreign phrasing of their originals, and even of those ascetical or devotional *clichés* which are responsible for the impression of unreality too often left upon us by the best intentioned, even, of hagiographers.

For hagiography has, indeed, created for itself canons unshared by any other kind of literature professing to be historical; and, in their reverence for their subject, the authors have frequently been so preoccupied with preaching a panegyric as to forget that their first duty was to paint a portrait.

But St. Aloysius has been, in some respects, singularly fortunate. The materials for his biography are unusually abundant, authentic, and unimpaired. Publicity was from the outset thrust upon him. His sensational abandonment

of position and prospects so distinguished made privacy even more impossible. Educated and responsible persons followed his career with close and continuous attention. His name is involved with others of international importance, and the report of his actions had echoes in all Europe. First-hand documentary evidence — legal, epistolary, and narrative — and the evidence of eye-witnesses, exist in remarkable quantities and are of high intrinsic value. The famous *Life* of his intimate acquaintance, Father Cepari, is uniquely precious; it is full, yet sober; and, in more than a few places, creates that impression of truthfulness which is due to a restrained emotion and to the simplicity of genuine literary art. Misinterpretations are rare, and easy of correction; text can at once be separated from commentary, and matter of first from that of secondary quality. The historical setting can always be readily reconstructed, and in many cases still subsists.

The publication of St. Aloysius' letters, and the output of literature which marked his tercentenary in 1891, were facts of the highest importance for the historian. Fr. Meschler is so well known among us for his ascetical writings, that it would be impertinence to emphasize the qualifications which so eminently fitted him to share in this remarkable movement, and which guarantee the wisdom of the decision to translate his famous German *Life* into English. He has prudently taken a middle course between a purely historical account of the young Saint, and the older devotional Lives which have come to seem inadequate to modern taste and standards. He has lost nothing of the treasures of tradition, and he has sought to be in sympathy with the ideals of to-day.

We trust that in our age, when wills, we hear, are weakened, purpose less tenacious, and ideals vulgarized, the heroic career of Aloysius will help many to generous

self-sacrifice; that, at a time when self-restraint is rare and difficult, his tremendous victory will keep many lives flawless; that he, who having put his hand to the plough, never looked back, may be powerful to form, in our generation, men of that supernatural and Catholic *character* which alone is permanent, and fruitful equally for the Christian service of our fellow-men, and for the infinite issues of eternity.

Hastings, 1911.

C. C. MARTINDALE S. J.

PART I.

THE SAINT IN THE WORLD.

1. The Ancestry, Birth, and Early Life of the Saint.

(Castiglione 1568—1572.)

Between the Swiss and Tyrolese Alps and the plain of Lombardy there lies a district of manifold and varied beauty, a land diversified by mountains, hills, and valleys, which latter serve as reservoirs for the waters that come coursing down from the Alps, and form numerous and charming lakes. Anything more beautiful than these lakes of Northern Italy can scarcely be found. On their shores the wild majesty of the Alpine world gradually passes into the softer outlines of gently-sloping, vine-covered hills and green plains; North and South seem to meet, and, as it were, interchange and mingle their beauty and manifold variety of vegetation. And over all these glories of nature the southern sky diffuses its warm colouring and its floods of golden light, which trembles in every shadow and on every wave, filling the heart with a wondrous, indescribable delight.

The most easterly of these lakes is the Lago di Garda, remarkable for its size and the beautiful colour of its waters, which vary from deepest green in the south to the most glorious blue as one passes to the north of the lake.

South of the Lago di Garda, between the Republic of Venice and the Duchies of Milan and Ferrara, there lay, three hundred years ago, the Duchy of Mantua and various other territories ruled by more or less powerful branches of the House of Gonzaga, one of the princely families of Northern Italy.

The ancestral castle of this noble race stood in the village still known as Gonzaga. The head of the family, Lewis Gonzaga, received by hereditary right the office of Captain of the train-bands of Mantua from Ludwig the Bavarian, in the year 1329, whilst the Emperor Sigismund conferred the dignity of Marquis upon John Francis Gonzaga, in 1433. The still higher title of Duke of Mantua was bestowed upon the Marquis Frederick Gonzaga, by Charles V., in 1530. Thus each century brought the noble house a new increase of power and honour. It is not surprising to find, therefore, that its family connections were not confined to the various Italian Courts, but gradually spread over the Alps as far as Lorraine, Wurtemberg, Bavaria, Brandenburg, and Austria. Daughters of the Dukes of Mantua became Empresses, and Emperors' daughters became Duchesses of Mantua [1].

In all the Italian feuds and wars the Gonzaga eagle was well to the front. Sons of this house were found over and over again in command of the armies of the Venetian Republic, of the Emperor, and even of the Pope [2]. The line was not less fruitful in princes of the Church. No less than ten Cardinals adorn the genealogical tree of St. Aloysius, and among these high dignitaries were men

---

[1] *Rittershusii* Genealogiae, Duces Mantuae, tab. A ff.

[2] On the 6th of July 1495, it was Francis Gonzaga, Marquis of Mantua, who led the allied armies against Charles VIII. of France, and gained the victory at Fornovo.

distinguished for their sanctity and learning, such as Cardinal Hercules Gonzaga, who presided for a time at the Council of Trent (1562)[1]. Among the ladies of this line we may mention: Elizabeth, Duchess of Urbino; Isabella, Duchess of Mantua; and the Countess Julia of Colonna, who are all rightly reckoned among the most illustrious Italian women of the 16th century. Even as regards morals the Gonzagas had a certain precedence among the princely houses of Italy; we do not find among them such open and flagrant crime and discord as elsewhere, or at all events not to such an extent[2].

Another proof of the vigour and vitality of the old stock was to be seen in the powerful off-shoots which sprang from it in course of time. In the 16th century we find, in addition to the parent line — the Ducal House of Mantua — the important families of the Counts of Novellara-Sabionetta, the Princes of Bozzoli, the Lords of Guastalla-Molfetta, and last but not least the Marquises of Castiglione[3].

The last-mentioned derived their name from the Castle of Castiglione (delle Stiviere), near the little town of the same name, which was situated on the high-road about half-way between Brescia and Mantua, in a charming stretch of country called in the flowery Italian tongue "asweet smile of nature"[4]. On entering the town (which numbered several thousand inhabitants) by the warlike-looking gates, one found oneself apparently transported to a region of pleasant summer resorts, for every residence

[1] *Narbone*, Dieci glorie di S. Luigi Gonzaga S. J.[2], Roma 1888, 4 208 f.

[2] *Burckhardt*, Kultur der Renaissance in Italien 43.

[3] Barbara of Hohenzollern, who married Lewis III., Marquis of Mantua, in 1433, was the ancestor of the three principal branches Gonzaga-Mantua, Bozzoli, and Castiglione.

[4] Eco di S. Luigi, Milano 1890, No. 7, p. 1.

was surrounded by green vineyards and gardens. In the square and spacious market-place in the middle of the town stood the Collegiate Church of SS. Celsus and Nazarius, which could boast of a chapter with an arch-priest at its head [1].

On the heights above the town towered the stronghold of the Marquises, known as the Rocca di Castiglione. From the outer gate, near which the soldiers had their quarters, a road led through beautiful gardens up to the castle itself. Here, between high ramparts and strong walls, were the dwellings of the various officials and the musketeers, the stables with forty horses, a riding-ground, the mint, the chancery with a fine colonnade, the seigneurial mansion, and the private Church of St. Sebastian. From the windows and turrets of the castle charming views of the environs met the eye. Below lay the town; a little farther on was an artificial lake, on the shores of which stood the Franciscan Convent of Santa Maria and one of the Marquis's summer residences; behind these rose beautiful hills and wooded heights, and beyond all, away in the distance, lay the blue waters of the Lago di Garda, with the majestic Alps, their summits lost in a background [2] of clouds.

Here, surrounded by all the splendour with which that art-loving age loved to adorn the homes of princes, dwelt the head of the House of the Castiglione Gonzagas. The reigning Marquis, Ferdinand, had entered the town and castle in triumph with his young bride Donna Martha, Countess of Tana Santena, on the 19th of March 1567. He was a man of culture and possessed of considerable military ability; he was also a loyal and practical Catholic,

[1] Bollandistae 848 A. 985 E.

[2] *Narbone* 207.

and had scorned to endanger his faith by accepting a post of honour offered to him by Henry VIII. of England. This was the important post of Commander-in-Chief of all the King's cavalry [1]. Even when at Court Marquis Ferdinand remained faithful to his practice of approaching the Sacraments nearly every month [2]. He was a perfect courtier and typical grandee of his age, eagerly bent upon upholding the honour of his family, and at times passionately addicted to gambling. Like so many other Italian princes, he had taken service under the King of Spain, and gained the Grand Cross of the Order of Alcantara for his gallantry in the campaign against the Sultan of Barbary, at Oran, and also at the defence of the fortress of Perpignan against the French. The courage he displayed had won for him the special favour of his sovereign lord King Philip II. [3]

The great friendship between the King and his General may best be seen in the latter's choice of no less a personage than His Most Catholic Majesty to be his intercessor in suing for the hand of one of the Queen's maids-of-honour, and in the fact that Philip and his consort Elizabeth actually undertook the matter and brought it to a happy issue. Ferdinand's betrothed was the Lady Martha, daughter of Don Balthasar Tana Santena of Chieri, near Turin (Piedmont), and Donna Anna della Rovere. The Roveres were the Lords of Urbino, once very celebrated for martial deeds and encouragement of the fine arts. Their house had given to the Church two Popes — Sixtus IV. and Julius II. — and eleven Cardinals [4]. Donna Martha herself

---

[1] Ib. 206. *Chiarenza* S. J., „Una giornata a Castiglione", Bologna 1879, 34.

[2] Bolland. 923 E. 924 C. [3] Ib. 851 A.

[4] *Narbone* II 209.

had accompanied her parents to the Court of Henry II., King of France, for Piedmont was governed by France until the year 1559; and having become the favourite maid-of-honour of Elizabeth of Valois, this monarch's daughter, she followed her to Spain on her marriage with Philip II.[1] At the Court of Madrid she won the affection of Don Ferdinand by her admirable qualities, especially her gentleness and piety. On hearing of the Marquis's wish, Donna Martha asked for time to reflect, and caused a number of Masses to be said in honour of the Most Holy Trinity, the Holy Ghost, the Sacred Passion, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the holy angels, in order to obtain from God the grace to decide aright in the matter. At length she accepted the proposal, and received from her royal mistress a handsome dowry. The betrothal was celebrated on the 24th of June 1566. The happy pair prepared themselves for this important step by receiving Holy Communion in the morning and fulfilling the other conditions of a jubilee indulgence just announced by the newly-elected Pope Pius V. In accordance with the wish of Queen Isabella, the marriage was to be deferred until after her confinement, which did not take place until the 11th of August. Soon after this the ceremony was celebrated with great pomp. The whole Court and the King's illustrious guests, the Archdukes Rudolph and Ernest of Austria, were present. The marriage took place in the Royal Chapel; it was the

---

[1] Philip had four wives. The first was Mary of Portugal (1543 to 1545), the mother of the unfortunate Don Carlos (1568); the second, Mary of England (1554—1558); the third, Isabel de Valois (1559—1568), who had two daughters, Clara Eugenie and Catherine; the fourth, Anne Mary of Austria (1570—1580), who gave birth to five children, only three of whom survived her, viz. James (Diego), Philip, and Mary.

first which was celebrated in Spain in accordance with the new regulations prescribed by the Council of Trent. In the beginning of the following year the young couple left Spain; but before they departed Philip gave the Marquis a new proof of his special favour, by conferring upon him the dignity of Grand Chamberlain, giving him considerable revenues from possessions in Naples and Milan, and also appointing him Commander-in-Chief of all the Italian infantry. On their arrival in Castiglione, the Marquis and his young wife entered upon the duties of their high position with great zeal. As a specially praiseworthy feature of their lives we may mention their habit of attending Divine Service on Sundays and Feast-days in the parish church instead of in their private chapel, in order to encourage their subjects to regular attendance, by the influence of their own example. Donna Martha gave herself up entirely to works of piety and charity, and redoubled her zeal on perceiving that Almighty God had granted her the hope of children. She herself acknowledged that she felt at this time an insatiable desire to read good books. She prayed to God most fervently to grant her a son, and promised that, if her prayer were heard, she would dedicate him to His service in one of the religious orders.

Her prayer was indeed to be granted; but this son she so ardently desired was first to cause her great pain and anxiety. The Marchioness and her child were both in the greatest danger at the time of her delivery. All human aid having proved vain, the mother in her distress asked her husband's permission to make a vow to go with her child on a pilgrimage to the shrine of Our Lady of Loretto, if the Blessed Virgin would save their lives by her intercession. No sooner had the vow been made than the danger passed. In the anxiety which had been entertained for his life the child had been baptized before his

birth; and thus, as the breviary says, he was born for heaven before he came into this world. The delivery was at length happily accomplished towards six o'clock in the evening of Tuesday, March 9th, 1568. The happy mother immediately asked to have the child placed in her arms; she made the sign of the Cross on his forehead and embraced him, with every token of motherly love and all good wishes for his temporal and eternal welfare. The little one submitted to it all without a sound, and lay quite still and motionless, so that the attendants did not know whether he was alive or dead. At length he uttered a little cry, — for the first and last time during the whole of his babyhood.

On the following morning the arrival of the Heir Apparent was proclaimed to all the subjects of the Marquis by the firing of cannon from the Rocca, as well as by an official proclamation of Don Ferdinand and the solemn chanting of the Te Deum in the parish church. To add to the general rejoicing over the happy event, bread and wine, according to the custom of the time, were liberally distributed in the court-yard of the castle throughout the day. The people were entertained by all kinds of popular sports, such as races, sack-races, and climbing the pole, for which there were valuable prizes [1]. The solemn ceremonies necessarily omitted at his hasty baptism were not performed upon the Marquis's first-born son until the 20th of April. Duke William of Mantua, who had been requested to act as sponsor, sent as his representative Don Prosper Gonzaga, a relative of his own and the son of a cousin of Don Ferdinand. The wife of Don Alfonso of Castel Goffredo, sister-in-law of Don Ferdinand, acted as godmother. The child received the name of Aluigi or Aloysius,

[1] Eco di S. Luigi ann. II, No. 19, p. 5.

which had been borne by his grandfather and the ancestor of the three houses of Mantua, Bozzoli, and Castiglione [1]. The ceremony took place in the parish church of SS. Celsus and Nazarius, and was performed by the arch-priest John Pastorio, who, after entering the child's name in the baptismal register, wrote the following words: "May he be happy, beloved by the thrice holy and powerful God, and may he live for ever in the memory of men." A young student from Padua, named Rossi, delivered a fine discourse in Italian [2] after the ceremony. The party then returned to the Castle amidst the shouts of a joyful throng of people, especially the poor and the young, amongst whom the major-domo cast handfuls of money and bonbons.

From this time no one in the Castle was the object of more tender affection and solicitous care than little Aloysius. He was the first-born son, and Heir Apparent to all the feudal lands of the whole line of Castiglione; for Don Ferdinand had only two brothers — Horace, Lord of Solferino, who was childless, and Alfonso, Lord of Castel Goffredo, who had an only daughter, Catherine.

As regards the earliest years of our Saint, we are told that Aloysius was never naughty, but the picture of charming tranquillity and content. He soon showed signs of great innate piety, which his mother did not fail to foster. She constantly encouraged him to make the sign of the Cross and to lisp the holy names of Jesus and Mary, and later on to learn by heart and repeat the Our Father and

---

[1] *Rittershusii* Genealogiae, Duces Mantuae, tab. B. Aluigi or Aloigi is the same name as Luigi, or Lewis. Aloysius always signed himself Aluigi; his father and brothers called him sometimes Aluigi, sometimes Aloigi; and the Marquis of Mantua, Aloisio.

[2] Bolland. 923 F.

birth; and thus, as the breviary says, he was born for heaven before he came into this world. The delivery was at length happily accomplished towards six o'clock in the evening of Tuesday, March 9th, 1568. The happy mother immediately asked to have the child placed in her arms; she made the sign of the Cross on his forehead and embraced him, with every token of motherly love and all good wishes for his temporal and eternal welfare. The little one submitted to it all without a sound, and lay quite still and motionless, so that the attendants did not know whether he was alive or dead. At length he uttered a little cry, — for the first and last time during the whole of his babyhood.

On the following morning the arrival of the Heir Apparent was proclaimed to all the subjects of the Marquis by the firing of cannon from the Rocca, as well as by an official proclamation of Don Ferdinand and the solemn chanting of the Te Deum in the parish church. To add to the general rejoicing over the happy event, bread and wine, according to the custom of the time, were liberally distributed in the court-yard of the castle throughout the day. The people were entertained by all kinds of popular sports, such as races, sack-races, and climbing the pole, for which there were valuable prizes [1]. The solemn ceremonies necessarily omitted at his hasty baptism were not performed upon the Marquis's first-born son until the 20th of April. Duke William of Mantua, who had been requested to act as sponsor, sent as his representative Don Prosper Gonzaga, a relative of his own and the son of a cousin of Don Ferdinand. The wife of Don Alfonso of Castel Goffredo, sister-in-law of Don Ferdinand, acted as godmother. The child received the name of Aluigi or Aloysius,

[1] Eco di S. Luigi ann. II, No. 19, p. 5.

which had been borne by his grandfather and the ancestor of the three houses of Mantua, Bozzoli, and Castiglione [1]. The ceremony took place in the parish church of SS. Celsus and Nazarius, and was performed by the arch-priest John Pastorio, who, after entering the child's name in the baptismal register, wrote the following words: "May he be happy, beloved by the thrice holy and powerful God, and may he live for ever in the memory of men." A young student from Padua, named Rossi, delivered a fine discourse in Italian [2] after the ceremony. The party then returned to the Castle amidst the shouts of a joyful throng of people, especially the poor and the young, amongst whom the major-domo cast handfuls of money and bonbons.

From this time no one in the Castle was the object of more tender affection and solicitous care than little Aloysius. He was the first-born son, and Heir Apparent to all the feudal lands of the whole line of Castiglione; for Don Ferdinand had only two brothers — Horace, Lord of Solferino, who was childless, and Alfonso, Lord of Castel Goffredo, who had an only daughter, Catherine.

As regards the earliest years of our Saint, we are told that Aloysius was never naughty, but the picture of charming tranquillity and content. He soon showed signs of great innate piety, which his mother did not fail to foster. She constantly encouraged him to make the sign of the Cross and to lisp the holy names of Jesus and Mary, and later on to learn by heart and repeat the Our Father and

---

[1] *Rittershusii* Genealogiae, Duces Mantuae, tab. B. Aluigi or Aloigi is the same name as Luigi, or Lewis. Aloysius always signed himself Aluigi; his father and brothers called him sometimes Aluigi, sometimes Aloigi; and the Marquis of Mantua, Aloisio.

[2] Bolland. 923 F.

ravages of schism and apostasy were drawing ever nearer, and spreading far and wide. Under the wavering rule of Maximilian II. (1564—1576) and the inactivity of Rudolph II. (1576—1612), Protestantism was forcing its way farther into Austria, and trying to gain a legal footing. France was rent by incessant religious and civil wars under Charles IX. (1560—1574) and Henry III. (1575—1589), the last of the Valois, until at last the accession and conversion of Henry IV. (1589—1610) brought peace to the country and firmly re-established the Catholic faith. In the Netherlands the fight against the old religion and the Spanish supremacy was still raging, and bearing bloody fruit. In the very year of Aloysius' birth the heads of the unfortunate Counts Egmont and Horn had fallen under the executioner's axe at Brussels. In the distant island-kingdom of England the Calvinistic Queen Elizabeth held sway (1558—1603), deceiving, like a Circe, all the princes, murdering her Catholic subjects, even the unhappy Queen of Scots (1587), and incessantly throwing fresh fuel on the fires of battle in the Catholic countries of the Continent. Against this general assault of heresy it was only with labour and trouble that Austria was able to hold its own, even in league with Spain, which was then, under Philip II. (1556—1598), at the height of its political power, and had cast its sword into the balance in favour of the old religion. Lombardy, the native province of St. Aloysius, was one of the points of contact where the rule of both these great powers met. The Duchy of Milan, under Philip II. of Spain, and the Duchy of Mantua, as well as most of the other states of North Italy, were under the rule of the German Empire.

Thus, at this juncture, the stability of the Catholic religion in Europe was in no little danger. But the old Church was not dead. A new breath of the Spirit of God passed

over her, and awoke her to new life and strength. At the Council of Trent she had clearly defined her position against the new foes, by exact definitions of her doctrine in faith and morals. She had strengthened her bulwarks, and drawn up a plan of counter-reform, at which she was now labouring with all her strength. The wise, just, and indefatigable Pope Pius V., who was afterwards canonized, held the keys of St. Peter from 1566 to 1572. He was followed by a succession of excellent Pontiffs: Gregory XIII. (1572—1585), Sixtus V. (1585—1590), and Gregory XIV. (1590—1591), who all worked with unremitting energy at the reform of the Church. A glorious phalanx of eminent men and great saints gathered round them, and numerous new orders sprang up in every country. In Milan St. Charles Borromeo was working, and the Society of Jesus, to which Aloysius was afterwards to belong, had already gained a firm footing in Spain, Germany, France, and the Netherlands. Under the influence of such forces as these a spirit of earnest piety and zealous effort at reform soon appeared, having for its aim not only to ensure the perseverance of those who had remained faithful, but also to win back the lost sheep.

Aloysius' cradle stood just at the cross-ways, the meeting-place of the roads of the great world — the roads from Rome, Prague, and Madrid. The circumstances of his birth, his blood-relationship and connection with the great leaders of political and religious life all opened to him the doors of every great vocation connected with the serious interests of the day. It was to depend upon his own choice whether he would leave his mark upon his age as a statesman, a soldier, a *savant*, or a priest. Which would he choose? Or rather, what would God choose for him?

Donna Martha saw with great joy the excellent dispositions of her son; in his piety especially she saw her

secret wishes about to be fulfilled. But Don Ferdinand's desires lay in a different direction. He was by taste and calling a soldier, and he expected that his first-born son, who was not only to succeed him in the Marquisate, but also to inherit the dominions of his two brothers, Alfonso of Castel Goffredo and Horace of Solferino, should also choose the glorious career of arms. And he did not think too much piety a good thing for this calling. So, in order to instil into his little son more taste for the soldier's trade, Don Ferdinand had a uniform and suitable weapons made for him — little muskets and arquebusses, small enough for him to use. As may well be imagined, the child of four years was delighted with his smart costume and the crack of the new playthings.

Not long after this, his father found a welcome opportunity of removing Aloysius completely, for a time at least, from the influence of his mother and female attendants, who, Don Ferdinand considered, were making quite a girl of him. He could now introduce his little son to regular camp-life, which, he thought, would be certain to strengthen his martial vocation. As we have already seen, Don Ferdinand, not long before leaving Spain, had been appointed by Philip II. Commander-in-Chief of the Italian troops in the territory of Milan. At this time a new expedition was preparing to start against Tunis. The town and province of Tunis, on the Barbary coast, which had been won for Christendom by Charles V. in the year 1535, had again fallen into the hands of the Mohammedans. Spain had only retained Goletta, a port at the entrance to the Gulf of Tunis. Don Juan of Austria was going to lead against Tunis the victorious galleys which had just returned from the Battle of Lepanto (1571), and the Marquis of Castiglione received orders to bring a contingent of 3000 men of the Italian infantry to join the army, and

take the command of the Italian fleet[1]. He chose the fortress of Casale Maggiore on the River Po as the meeting-place for the mustering of these forces, and betook himself thither, accompanied by his four-or five-year-old son and his retinue.

Don Ferdinand had not been mistaken in his calculations. The whole of his surroundings — the gay and lively camp-life, the pageant of the enlistment and drilling of the troops — did not fail to make an impression upon the sprightly, intelligent boy. The infantry regiments of that day presented a very richly coloured picture. There were no common uniforms as yet; the various companies were only distinguished by their banners and coloured ribbons or bands. The costume was left to the taste and purse of each individual. The infantry were armed with pikes; but after fire-arms had proved so efficacious between the French and the Germans, they adopted muskets. The pikemen were equipped with pikes 18 feet long, and also with rapiers, cuirasses, and cuishes. The musketeers carried matchlocks, powder-flasks, and rapiers. All wore the morion or the pear-shaped helmet, and leathern buskins[2]. The Swiss and the Spanish infantry were considered the best.

Aloysius also wore a little plumed helmet, a light coat of mail short enough to let the Spanish breeches be seen, and a little rapier with a basket-hilt at his side. In his hand he carried the halberd, the distinguishing weapon of the captains and officers, and in this guise marched proudly by his father's side. Fire-arms had a special attraction for him, and it was his great delight to let them off. The little captain was soon a great favourite with

---

[1] *Narbone*, Dieci glorie di S. Luigi Gonzaga S. J. 6.

[2] *Heyden*, Tracht der Kulturvölker Europas 239.

the soldiers, who readily granted his heart's desire and let him handle their muskets. But he was not particularly fortunate with his shooting experiments. Once the powder flew out of the touch-pan and sadly burnt his face. Thereupon, it seems, he was deprived of powder; but he himself was not greatly intimidated by this piece of ill-luck. On the contrary, he pondered upon a means of satisfying his martial desire for fire-arms after his own fashion. One mid-day, as almost everyone in the camp was resting, a cannon-shot suddenly boomed from one of the out-works, startling all to their feet. The Marquis thought that a mutiny had broken out in the camp, and sent his officers to inquire into the matter. The disturber of the peace was soon discovered. Aloysius had quietly slipped away, stolen into the soldiers' tents, taken powder from their flasks, and then loaded and fired off a little piece of ordnance, all by himself. The little artilleryman was within an ace of being killed by the recoil of the gun-carriage; but his guardian angel watched over him, and so he escaped with a good knock and a terrible fright. This exploit of his son seemed rather too much of a good thing to the Marquis, and he was about to punish him as an offender against military discipline; but the soldiers pleaded for the pardon of their bold captain, and so the matter was allowed to pass. In after life, when Aloysius spoke of this adventure, he was accustomed to thank Providence for his escape, but could never tire of accusing himself of the wrong-doing in which he had gone so far as to appropriate others' property.

But this soldier-life in the camp had still worse dangers for the intelligent boy. The conversation and example of camps and barracks are not always the most edifying. When Aloysius mixed with the soldiers and listened to their talk in the tents or at the watch-fires, he heard all

sorts of jokes and bad language. In his eagerness to imitate the soldiers in all they did, he too began to make use of these expressions. His tutor, Francis del Turco overheard this, and reproved him severely. Fortunately the camp-life only lasted a few months. The Marquis was satisfied with the result of his experiment, and sent Aloysius back to his mother in the early summer of the following year (1573), whilst he himself led his troops across the sea to Tunis.

That was Aloysius' soldier-life, or, as he called it, his sinful life; and he never ceased to regret it and repent of it till his death. He had in reality only committed very trifling faults. By his own admission, he had justified to himself the taking of the powder with the thought that the soldiers would certainly have given it to him if he had asked them. And as for the unseemly expressions he had used, the child had not even understood the meaning of them, and when told by his tutor, he was so ashamed that he could not bring himself to name them to his confessor later on; he always blushed and was covered with confusion when anyone uttered a similar word in his presence. He afterwards said that he had not thought himself bound to confess them at this time, but he did not think he would have ventured to receive his First Communion, later on, with this fault upon his conscience [1].

These occurrences were of advantage to Aloysius in three ways. They made him humble for his whole life; they constantly spurred him on to penance; and lastly, they made him cautious and reserved in his dealings with the world. He felt that he had been treading on slippery ground, and drew back before there was danger of a lamentable fall. Influenced by these events, he was gradual-

[1] Bolland. 896 F. 923 C.

ly drawn to the retired and penitential life that he led henceforth, and the first glimpse of that natural courage and strength of will of which he afterwards gave such brilliant proof was now revealed. God knows how to turn everything to the good of his elect, and to make everything serve the ends of His Divine Providence. Aloysius' father wished to win him for the world, and God won him for His own special service. "With the Lord shall the steps of a man be directed. . . . When he shall fall, he shall not be bruised: for the Lord putteth his hand under him" (Ps. xxxvi. 23 24).

3. The Conversion.

(Castiglione 1573—1577.)

Aloysius was back again in quiet, pretty Castiglione with his mother and little brothers, of whom there were now three [1]. In this peaceful circle the playing at soldier-life came to an end, and made way for other occupations. The boy, who was five years old, had now to begin his studies. His first teacher was John Albertinelli, of Castiglione, and after the death of this instructor Julius Bresciani of Cremona took his place. His tutor was the excellent Peter Francis del Turco, a native of Florence.

His spiritual life began especially to develop at this time. He heard and served Mass every day, and, alone

[1] The Marquis Ferdinand had seven other children besides Aloysius: six sons and one daughter. They were: Rudolph, born May 7th 1569, died Jan. 3rd 1593; Ferdinand, born April 15th 1570, died May 9th 1577; Charles, born July 9th 1572, died Aug. 23rd 1574; Isabella, born Nov. 12th 1574, died in 1593; Francis, born April 27th 1577, died Oct. 23rd 1616; Christian Vincent, born Sept. 30th 1580, died 1635; Diego, born Sept. 1582, died Aug. 18th 1597. Christian Vincent's line alone continued until 1819 in the Marquisate.

or with his tutor, he recited daily with the greatest devotion and recollection the so-called "Exercitium quotidianum", a collection of vocal prayers, consisting of the Little Office of Our Lady, the Gradual and Penitential Psalms, and some other prayers. He never used a prie-dieu or a cushion, but knelt on the floor, and retained this custom throughout his whole after-life.

About this time Aloysius was attacked by quartan ague, which troubled him for a year and a half, and made him so weak that at times he was confined to his bed. But he was very patient, and even these circumstances could never induce him to omit his accustomed devotions. When he was too weak to sit upright in bed, he asked one of his mother's maid-servants to support him while he recited his prayers.

Aloysius called this period his conversion. Although, as he afterwards confidentially told Father Mutius Vitelleschi, who later became General of the Society of Jesus, he had offered himself to God with his whole heart from the very first dawn of reason [1], still it was from his seventh year that he began to turn all his thoughts and endeavours to God, and to devote his life to His service with still greater zeal and earnestness. Cardinal Bellarmine considers this one of the special graces bestowed upon the Saint [2].

The pious boy often confided his inmost thoughts and aspirations to his mother. As she once told him she would be glad to have one of her children enter a religious order, he said it might very possibly come to pass that God would grant her this favour. A few days later he returned to the subject, repeated these words, and added that he himself hoped to be the one to give her this pleasure. And although his mother replied that that would

[1] Bolland. 928 E. 1124 F. [2] Ib. 1037 C.

be a difficult matter, because he was the eldest son, she nevertheless made a mental note of his words, especially as the child's increasing piety and love of prayer made their fulfilment seem very probable. But Aloysius did not really think seriously yet of embracing the religious state; his whole solicitude was to serve God as faithfully and perfectly as possible in his present position. All who knew him and had to do with him at this time regarded him as a holy and truly angelic child [1].

An incident that occurred at this period still further confirmed this general opinion. A Franciscan friar who was said to be a Saint came to the monastery of Santa Maria, not far from Castiglione. All sorts of marvels were circulated with respect to him, and everyone flocked to see him and ask his prayers. Some possessed persons were brought to him to be exorcised, and on one of these occasions Aloysius and his brother Rudolph were present, with others of the nobility and gentry of the neighbourhood. Suddenly the demoniac turned to Aloysius, pointed his finger at him, and cried: "Do you see him? He will be in Heaven one day, and be in great glory." This was reported through all Castiglione, and was never forgotten.

These first years of St. Aloysius' childhood were like the picture of a bright and beautiful spring morning. Over the quiet, unspotted dales hovers the dewy mist, hanging like a delicate, filmy veil about the hedges, woods, and meadows. This dew is not only the peculiar beauty of a morning in spring, but also the harbinger of blessing for the fruit and crops. The sunlight is refracted in its pearly drops; with it the nightingale drinks in its joy in life and song, and the buds swell with the blessed gift. Thus it was with these early years of our Saint's life. All was

[1] Bolland. 928 F.

peaceful and charming; we do not find at this time the earnest work of the later summer, but only the dewy mist — piety and love of prayer — hovers over everything, giving fertility and blessing. Piety is the beauty, the first virtue, and the blessing of a childish heart. What more can a child do than pray? But that is doing a great deal. It shows the relationship of its soul with God, and draws down a blessing upon its future life. But with Aloysius prayer and piety had already formed and developed the solid fruit of real devotion, that is, complete abandonment to the service of God — a rare fruit, and one that in later years is often sought for in vain, under the gloss and brilliancy of great exterior activity, and even under the venerable aureole of silvery hair. With what difficulty and how late does a man give himself up with his whole heart to God's service! And yet everything depends upon this inward, sincere, and complete devotion. This is what Aloysius calls his conversion, and so it is. To fear God and keep His commandments — this is the whole man (Eccl. xii. 13).

4. The Cradle of Holiness.

(Florence 1577—1580.)

The campaign against Tunis, which had promised so well, won few laurels for the Christian army; on the contrary, the whole undertaking came to a most unfortunate end, for want of support from Spain[1], and even Goletta had to be abandoned to the Mohammedans in the year 1574. Don Ferdinand had gone to the Court of Madrid as soon as the campaign was over, and after spending two years there, he started for Castiglione again, before the close of the year 1576.

[1] *Weiss*, Lehrbuch der Weltgeschichte IV, Part II. 592.

On his return home he noticed with surprise and pleasure the progress his eldest son had made. The old martial spirit had disappeared, it is true; but its place had been taken by earnest piety, polished manners, and an intelligence mature beyond his years. And although there seemed to be no longer any chance of his becoming a warlike hero, and in this way covering his house with glory, still his father confidently hoped to find in him a good and wise prince to rule his subjects.

The Marquis had not long been home, when suddenly that terrible pestilence broke out, which struck the whole of Italy with terror, and devastated Verona, Mantua, and Milan, the towns near Castiglione, in the most terrible manner. It was at the time of this dreadful scourge that St. Charles Borromeo showed that well-known heroic charity and pastoral solicitude for his people that has made him famous and popular among Christian people of every age. Under these circumstances, Marquis Ferdinand deemed it advisable to retire for a time with his whole family to the Marquisate of Montferrato, which lay outside the infected district. But here he was severely attacked by gout, and the doctors advised him to go and take the baths at Lucca. The weak health of his second son, Rudolph, rendered it desirable that he also should take these baths, and so the Marquis decided to take not only him, but also Aloysius to Lucca. His plan was to take both boys to Florence after the cure, to introduce them to the Grand Duke of Tuscany, and leave them there for a time for the sake of their education. He had been on a friendly footing with the Grand Duke since they had stayed together at the Court of Madrid, and he desired to keep up an acquaintanceship which would reflect honour on his family. Besides, Florence was at this time the seat of art and science, as well as of polished,

courtly manners. Nowhere was the Italian tongue spoken with such purity as there. These were all unusual advantages for his sons' future, which the father, in his solicitude for the prestige of his house, did not wish to neglect. The mother shrank from the thought of parting with her children at such a tender age, and opposed the plan. But the Marquis carried his point, and, in the early summer of 1577, started for Lucca with Aloysius and Rudolph.

The baths of Lucca, in the shady, chestnut-grown valleys of the Apennines, were much frequented in the summer season. Living was cheap and comfortable in the gay old city, for at this time it enjoyed all the privileges of the free towns of the good old Middle Age. In May and October especially there were many good and innocent amusements[1]. From Lucca and its baths the Marquis and his suite went on to Tuscany, the land of plenty, art and culture, with its beautiful high-roads, bridges, and paved towns. Florence was the centre and flower of all this splendour, the seat of the Medici, and the rival of Rome in the sciences and fine arts. Some decades of years had passed since the days of Cosimo and Lorenzo; but still among the princes of the younger line there was artistic taste and emulation enough to keep up the former renown of their House and city. Since 1574, Francis I. (1541 to 1587), the father of Mary de Medici, had been in power. His wife was Joan of Austria, a daughter of Maximilian II., and it was to them that Aloysius was to be presented.

When, however, the travellers arrived at the city gates and desired admittance, they were unceremoniously repulsed. Orders had been given to admit no one without

[1] *Hübner*, Sixtus V., I 106.

a certificate of health, for fear of the plague; and not even for the Marquis and his suite would the officials make an exception. In this dilemma, it is probable that the tutor of the two princes, Peter Francis del Turco, placed his house or that of his relative, James del Turco, at the disposal of the Marquis as a temporary shelter. It lay about a league from the city, at the foot of the mountain from the summit of which old Fiesole looks down upon the valley of the Arno and the surrounding district. This little country-house, Fontanella by name, is still to be seen, standing near the old Dominican monastery, San Domenico, which gave to the city of Florence the holy archbishop St. Antoninus, and to the celebrated Monastery of St. Mark in the same city the immortal Fra Angelico. San Domenico or St. Dominic is a charming little spot, with countless pretty villas and gardens, from the rocky terraces of which tropical aloes and cactus, dark cypresses, olives with their silvery sheen, broad-leaved fig-trees, laurels, sweet-scented rosemary, and flaming rose-bushes greet the passer-by. During his stay at Florence, Aloysius often visited it, and made it his summer resort. The room he used on these occasions has been turned into a chapel by the family of Del Turco, who still reside in Florence. An inscription states that Aloysius repeatedly sanctified this room by his presence, and that the altar in it was erected by the family in the year of his canonization by Pope Benedict XIII., 1727.

From Fiesole the Marquis sent word to the Grand Duke of his arrival and wish to visit him. He was at once requested to come, and was received at court with every mark of honour and deference. When the Marquis, after introducing his sons, expressed his wish to leave them in Florence for their education, the Grand Duke was so pleased that he at once offered them apartments in his

palace. But as Don Ferdinand wished his sons not only to attend court, but also to study, the Grand Duke hired at his own expense a residence for them and their attendants in the Via degli Angeli, or, as it is now called, Via degli Alfani [1]. This house also is still in existence, and bears on the front a picture of St. Aloysius and a marble tablet with an inscription to the effect that he once resided there. This tablet was affixed to the house in 1688, whilst Cosmo III. was in power. The room that Aloysius occupied has been transformed into a chapel. The steward or major-domo was the trusty Peter Francis del Turco; Julius Bresciano, a priest from Cremona, was the princes' tutor and instructor, and the post of chief chamberlain was filled by Clement Ghizoni, who had hitherto been the Marquis's own major-domo, and was a retainer of proved fidelity and attachment to his master's family. After having thus provided in the best manner possible for his sons' welfare, Don Ferdinand returned to Castiglione.

Aloysius was now in gay, beautiful Florence, and remained there for rather more than two years, from his ninth until his twelfth year [2]. He devoted his time to

[1] According to Baldinucci (Notizie dei Professori de Disegno da Cimabue in qua, Decennale VI, Secolo IV, vol. II, Firenze 1846, 359), this residence was one of the three houses which, together with the adjoining building for drying the wool and cloth (tiratoj), formed the quarters of the wool-weavers. The lease on which the Grand Duke held the house from the weavers' guild lasted, according to documents, from the 1st of November 1577 till the end of April 1580. But we see from the account-book kept by the tutor, Del Turco, that the two princes took up their abode in the house on the 5th of December 1577, and left Florence for good on the 10th of November 1579. Cf. *Schröder*, Life of St. Aloysius by Cepari (English edition by Fr. Goldie), Einsiedeln 1891, 341 349.

[2] Aloysius' stay in Florence was only twice interrupted by a visit to Lucca; once (in 1578) to see his father, who was taking the

secular learning as well as to the science of the Saints. He was very eager to learn, and studied both Latin and Italian. Two letters written by him to his father during the first year of his stay at Florence have been preserved, and as they are most characteristic of the ten-year-old writer, we give them here word for word:

"Illustrious and honoured Father,

We were sorry to learn from your letter of the 6th instant that you had again been suffering from gout in the foot, accompanied by slight fever; but we are glad, however, that both are abating. The other letter from our mother, of the 8th instant, consoled us, as we learnt from it that you were now convalescent. Thanks be to God!

Yesterday we went to see the funeral of the Grand Duchess[1]; it was a very beautiful sight, and lasted three hours. The following was the order of the procession: First came the standard of St. Laurence, and then the cross. These were accompanied by 150 poor persons dressed in mourning, and carrying lighted torches. They were followed by the friars not only of the city, but also of the surrounding country within a radius of three miles — members of eighteen different religious orders in all, carrying white candles of a pound-weight. Then came the mourners with the usual trains[2], and the priests with candles like those borne by the friars; these again were followed by the pages, knights, and courtiers, all in mourning, with torches in their hands.

---

baths for the second time, and again (in 1579) to take the cure himself (*Schröder* 350).

[1] The Grand Duchess Joan.

[2] These trains were several yards in length, and were attached to hoods.

Next came the coffin under a canopy; the bearers of the body were gentlemen of the court, and the canopy was carried by noblemen of the city. Last came the Grand Duke in cap and mantle, with the rest of the court and the armed guard of honour. After accompanying the coffin to San Lorenzo he retired to his Palace.

We continue our devotions and studies, and are in good health. I have nothing else to say. In conclusion I kiss your hands and those of our honoured mother, sister, and little brother.

April 1578. Your Lordship's dutiful son,
Aluigi Gonzaga." [1]

Four months later, Aloysius describes another pageant, which makes a peculiar impression upon us so soon after the death of the Grand Duchess.

"On Sunday we were with Don John [2] on the Grand Duke's stand to see the race for St. Anne's mantle, which was red in colour. The Count di Bagno's race-horse won it. On Friday we paid Don John a visit, and as he did not want to go out, we spent the time together cooking all sorts of things. But he ate nothing at all himself, for he was fasting to gain the Jubilee indulgence proclaimed by the Pope, which absolves from sin and punishment. For the same reason, he also prayed for the cessation of the disturbances in Flanders, for the exaltation of Holy Church, the extirpation of heresy, and the preservation of Christian princes. We wish to gain it next week, too, and we shall remember you in our prayers, as we always have done and shall continue to do.

Yesterday we were with Don John in the Pitti Palace, and whilst he was going with us to a fountain, the Prin-

[1] *Jozzi*, Lettere di S. Luigi Gonzaga, Pisa 1889, p. 3 ff.

[2] The Grand Duke's youngest brother.

cesses came with a number of dogs and joined us, saying they wanted to let the dogs run a race for the mantle. While the race was going on, the Grand Duke came through the garden-gate, accompanied by only four gentlemen, and watched the game. We all ran, the Princesses, Don John, and ourselves, and kept it up till evening. During these holidays we went to Mass at the Nunziata, and prayed to Our Lady for all graces and blessings, and a special increase of joy and comfort. We are well and studying diligently. In conclusion we kiss your Lordship's hand.

Florence, Aug. 17th 1578." [1]

A few other details with regard to the life led by Aloysius in Florence may be gathered from some interesting items in the account-book kept by the intendant, Del Turco, which has recently been brought to light again [2]. In the first place, the successive entries give us a vivid portrait of Aloysius' entire wardrobe. There is mention of the long black mantle, a stiff short mantle with a hood, trimmings of silk and satin, and silk ribbons; the simple, every-day attire of coloured stuff, and the gala doublets of white satin with gold and silver fastenings, fringes, and buttons, with button-holes stitched with red silk; blue and green stockings for the Spanish breeches; a velvet cap with trimmings of tulle and white or black feathers; embroidered gloves and white shoes with double soles; a dagger and a gold-hilted sword, the scabbard for

---

[1] *Jozzi*, Lettere di S. L. G. p. 5 f. — Cloths of gold brocade, or pieces of scarlet, yellow, or green silk were often given as prizes in the races and contests of those days. Cf. *Reumont*, Geschichte der Stadt Rom III b, 466.

[2] *Schröder* 340 344—348.

which was of black velvet trimmed with gold lace and fringe. That neither the useful nor the agreeable was neglected in providing for the education and amusement of the young gentleman in a manner befitting his rank, may be seen from the following entries: 4 soldi for pomade, 14 lire for dancing-lessons, 7 lire for the writing-master, 5 soldi for three story-books to read, 11 soldi for letter paper, 6 lire for a seal, 9 soldi for 2 tops with string, 3 soldi for 200 clay marbles (for shooting birds with a cross-bow), and 1 lire for a dog-chain. According to the accounts, Aloysius also gave presents; among others, a crystal vessel to Don John at the church feast, gratuities to Don John's dwarf and two of his servants, and also to the vergers of the Cathedral on his visit to the dome. The apothecary's account seems to have concerned Aloysius especially. He repeatedly had to be attended by a physician and a surgeon, and made use of oil of mustard for his chilblains, salve of gum and oil for application to his stomach, and dried roses and pomegranate-peel for a tooth-essence. So far the account-book.

Though Aloysius, as may be seen from all this, could not always escape taking part in public pageants and the amusements proper to his age and rank, still he endeavoured even at this early age to keep away from worldly amusements as much as possible. He often had to go to Court. There he was invited by the two princesses, Eleanor, afterwards Duchess of Mantua, and Mary, afterwards Queen of France, to take part in their games, and on these occasions they often had musicians and dancing-masters to teach them to dance. But Aloysius told them he would rather make little altars or spend the time in other pious pursuits; so he excused himself as often as politeness allowed, and went away to pray. The Duchess Eleanor afterwards related that he talked very little, loved solitude, and

even during their games often spoke of God: and that he had led such a holy life in every respect that their governesses had often held him up as an example to them. The servant who waited upon him from his seventh year said he had never allowed himself to be touched whilst dressing, and scarcely suffered the toe of his foot to be seen in putting on his boots: he always led a life of angelic purity [1].

Aloysius made indeed quite remarkable progress in the science of the Saints whilst in Florence, and later on he was accustomed to call this city the cradle of his spiritual life. He began to go to confession here oftener than he had done in Castiglione. He allowed himself, as it appears, to be overcome by shame in the first confession he made to the Rector of the College of the Society of Jesus, Father Francis de la Torre, and did not confess the unseemly soldier-expressions that he had made use of in Castle [2]. Troubled by conscientious scruples, he determined to make a general confession of his whole life, and prepared himself for it at home with much time and care. He was so overcome with confusion and contrition for his sinful life, as it appeared to him, that he fainted away in the confessional, and had to be taken home by his tutor. Recovering himself, he returned and completed his confes-

[1] Bollaud. 599 F. 600 A.

[2] It must not be concluded from this that Aloysius made a sacrilegious confession. As we have already remarked, to repented these occurrences as sins, but not as mortal sins, and although he would not have gone to Holy Communion without confessing them, still he did not think himself *bound* to do so, and if he now reproached himself for his base shame and resolved to make a general confession, it was not from necessity, but from holy fervour and a desire of completely mastering this shame, which was certainly dangerous.

conduct. He was really admirable in his humility, amiability, and gentleness; he despised no one but himself, honoured everyone else, and shunned all honour shown to him."[1]

His piety and fervour in prayer also increased greatly while in Florence. He was not as yet acquainted with mental prayer, but he on this account practised vocal prayer all the more. He recited his so-called "Daily Exercise" every morning and evening kneeling, heard Mass every day, and went to Vespers also on feast-days. On Sundays and Feasts he went to Confession and heard Mass in the little Church of San Giovannino, belonging to the Jesuits, which stood behind the palace of the Medici (the present Palazzo Riccardi). St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi, who afterwards became a Carmelite and bore such glorious testimony to Aloysius' sanctity and heavenly glory[2], used at this period, before she had entered religion, regularly to visit this little Church; so these two holy souls must often have been praying there at the same time[3].

Aloysius' great devotion to Our Lady developed in a special way at Florence. One of the largest and most beautiful churches in the city is the old Servite Church, La Santissima Annunziata, the favourite sanctuary of the Florentines, who in it find everything to remind them of their great fellow-citizen, St. Philip Benizi.

The spacious vestibule and the Church with its large sanctuary are decorated with pictures by Andrea del Sarto, representing the lives of the Blessed Virgin and St. Philip. The Lady Chapel close to the entrance, on the left-hand side, is held in especial veneration. The central feature

---

[1] Bolland. 929 C. 954 C. 963 F.

[2] *Schröder*, Life of St. Aloysius 274. Cf. also p. 262 of the present work. [3] Ib. 349.

of this chapel is a fresco of the Annunciation, dating from the 13th century. The Blessed Virgin is represented sitting in her chamber, radiant in the charm of her virginal youth and beauty, her head and eyes raised in ecstatic contemplation. Before her kneels the angel in white apparel, and from above, through a little window, the Heavenly Father sends down upon her the Holy Ghost in delicate golden rays. It is a charming and beautiful picture, held in such great veneration that, as a rule, it is kept veiled, and is only displayed to the gaze of the people on solemn occasions. At the time when St. Aloysius was in Florence, this unveiling had just taken place out of respect for St. Charles Borromeo, who said Mass at the altar of Our Lady, and received a copy of the picture as a gift from the Grand Duke Francis [1]. The altar and baldacchino, richly ornamented with gold, silver, precious stones and a number of votive tablets, were mostly the gift of the Medici family.

St. Aloysius also was specially attracted by this sanctuary. He visited it every day, and performed his devotions there. The Church was not without memorials of his own family. Luigi Gonzaga, who had been Commander-in-Chief of the Florentines, Marquis of Mantua and ancestor of the Mantua, Bozzoli and Castiglione branches of the family, had given 2000 golden florins towards the building of the chancel, and on the base of the cupola may still be read in large letters the inscription: "Ludovicus Gonzaga II. Marchio Mantuae Virgini Genitrici religionis causa posuit an. sal. MCCCCLXXVI." [2]

---

[1] There is also a copy in one of the chapels of Cologne Cathedral, on the right-hand side, not far from the so-called Dombild.

[2] Notizie istoriche delle Chiese Fiorentine, opera di Gius. Richa d. C. d. G. t. VIII, parte 4, lezione 4, n. 1.

About this time a book on the Rosary, by Fr. Caspar Loarte, S. J., fell into the hands of Aloysius. It so increased his love and devotion to Our Lady, that his heart overflowed with consolation when he reflected upon the mysteries of her life, and he was seized with an ardent longing to do something that would please her and give her great honour, that he might thus win her love and favour. One day, as he was kneeling in rapt devotion before the picture, he was inspired with the thought of consecrating his virginity to Our Lady, as the most acceptable gift that he could offer her. Acting quickly on this inspiration, with a heart filled with love and joy [1], he solemnly consecrated himself to her by a vow of perpetual chastity. Mary accepted the offering of his innocent heart, and in return, as he afterwards acknowledged to his confessor [2], obtained for him from God the extraordinary grace of never experiencing throughout his whole life the slightest breath of a temptation against the virtue of holy purity. This is a most unusual favour, seldom granted even to the Saints, and the more wonderful, seeing that Aloysius' life was passed in the higher circles and at courts, where there are so many dangers and temptations. It is true that he had had from his earliest childhood a natural aversion to the very shadow of anything impure, and even to any intercourse whatever with persons of the opposite sex; but this gives us all the more reason to wonder that, after taking this vow in the Annunziata, he redoubled his precautions and had recourse to all kinds of means in order to guard his purity against the slightest shadow of danger. It might be thought that he, who enjoyed such

[1] Such a vow must only be taken after mature deliberation and with the counsel of a spiritual director.

[2] Bolland. 897 F. 927 C. E.

privileges, would have contented himself with the ordinary care prescribed to all Christians; on the contrary, he it is who exceeds most, even of the Saints, in precautionary measures such as flight from the very slightest occasion of sin, and mortification of the flesh. He, who was preserved by a special grace of God from any temptation of this kind, went on his way through life as though he had been threatened on all sides by special dangers. From this time he accustomed himself never to raise his eyes, either in company or when going through the streets. He not only avoided all intercourse with women more scrupulously than ever, but he withdrew from all games and amusements, although his father would have wished him to take part in them [1]. He now began also to inflict all kinds of austerities upon his innocent flesh. Aloysius' vocation was that he should become a striking and a bright example for youth, in the preservation of angelic purity. What was unnecessary for himself, was to be done by him for the sake of those who were to follow him — for the general welfare of Christian youth. The young are not so proof against danger as he was, and yet they often rush thoughtlessly into it; the fire of concupiscence burns within them, and they wilfully add fuel to it; they are not so blameless as Aloysius, and yet they will not hear of mortification, vigilance, and seclusion. The picture of this holy youth is a warning, an earnest admonition to the world of frivolous, self-indulgent young people, bent upon the enjoyment of sensual pleasures.

The city of Florence was reputed to be the gayest in the world. It was called "Florence the Beautiful", and was the resort of all lovers of the beautiful. Citizens and kings had erected magnificent buildings. There were to be seen

[1] Ib. 929 F. 930 A.

old churches in the beautiful and pious style of early Christian art, with but a touch of gay ornament in the exterior. Convents and palaces were very sanctuaries and treasure-houses of art. There, in beautiful villas with pleasure-gardens and fountains, lived a most luxurious and highly-cultured Court, which revelled in masques and feasts. There the surrounding hills resounded with life and mirth, and the very maidens busy with the vintage sang stanzas from Ariosto. The ancient, liberty-loving families alone held aloof, and, viewing with displeasure the new order of Government, led a retired life in their castles and villas on the hills.

In the midst of all this life and gaiety Aloysius stood alone — an austere figure, almost as grave as stern old Vallombrosa or the Servite monastery on Mount Senario, which look down like earnest preachers of penance from their wooded solitude into the flowery valley of the Arno. But still he was not without joy. He had found the guiding star of his life — the sweet image of Our Lady was ever before his enraptured mind. It met him everywhere, in the golden mosaics of the old church-portals and in the masterpieces of the greatest artists. It was, as it were, the beautiful rose in the green wreath of art that ancient Florence had twined for herself, and hence the Cathedral is rightly called "Santa Maria del Fiore". It is not to be wondered at that Our Lady had won his innocent, childish heart! He passed his happiest hours at the altar of the Annunziata, and there was marked out for him his path in life. From beautiful Florence he took the most beautiful thing of all, the treasure of virginity and devotion to the Mother of God; her blessing accompanied him henceforth, and "all good things came to him together with her, and innumerable riches through her hands" (Wisd. vii. 11).

5. A Ray of Sunshine in the Mantuan Winter.

(Mantua 1579—1580.)

In November of the year 1579 [1] the Marquis recalled his sons from Florence to Mantua, whilst he himself, at the wish of Duke William, undertook the governorship of the Marquisate of Monferrato. Aloysius and Rudolph went with their suite to Mantua, where they were to make friends with Vincent, the Duke's son and the future head of the House of Gonzaga.

Mantua, "the glorious", the home of the singer of the Aeneid, of the "Swan of Mantua", a fortress well-known from early ages, lies in a kind of swampy lake, an expansion of the Mincio. It is connected with the mainland by a bridge and two dams. Under the rule of the Gonzagas, who were friends and patrons of art, the old stronghold had become, in an unpretentious way, a home of the fine arts. The painter Mantegna (1460—1506) did some beautiful work there in the Church of Sant'Andrea. In the vault of this church a drop of the Precious Blood of our Saviour was treasured, and this brought about the foundation of the Order of the Knights of the Most Holy Redeemer. Under Frederick, the first Duke of Mantua, and his highly accomplished mother Isabella d'Este, the city advanced by rapid strides [2]. The ducal palace, the castle, and the summer palace Del Te at the gate of the city were decorated with frescoes of fanciful design, by Giulio Romano, a pupil of Raphael (1492—1546); he also adorned the town with fine buildings. The ducal palace was one of the largest in Europe, and possessed valuable

[1] This is expressly stated in the account-book kept by Del Turco, their tutor. *Schröder* 349.

[2] *Reumont,* Geschichte der Stadt Rom III b 136.

Flemish tapestry, artistically painted ceilings, and marble floors. Most of the Gonzagas had palaces in the city.

Aloysius, who was now a little over eleven years old, resided in the palace of a certain Abbot Gonzaga [1], and was principally occupied in continuing his classical studies. One of his servants afterwards gave the following account of his spiritual life at this time: "All his thoughts and aspirations were directed to God. He shunned games, comedies, and other amusements of the nobility [2], but as often as politeness allowed, he remained at home to pray. When he went out, it was only to visit religious in their monasteries, and even with them his conversation was confined to spiritual matters. He did much good, especially to the members of his household, by instructions on the Christian life. If he heard an unbecoming word, he reproved the person in question, but with kindness and consideration. When we called him 'my lord' or 'your highness', he answered: 'To serve God is better than all the glory of the world.' I have often heard him say this, and even while he was a child, I regarded him as a Saint." [3] The members of the household of Don Prosper Gonzaga, whom Aloysius occasionally visited, were of the same opinion. There was a little chapel at the entrance to this palace, to which he always made his first visit; then he waited on the prince, and conversed with him and his family about God and spiritual things in such a manner that all

[1] In *"Rittershusii"* Duces Mantuæ we find two Abbots mentioned: Claudius of Felonica (tab. F) and Abbot Frederick (tab. C). The above mentioned palace is now the house No. 4 in the Via Giardino.

[2] It would seem, nevertheless, that Aloysius had to take part in the masques customary at court, for masks and costumes for these are mentioned in the account-book. *Schröder* 348.

[3] Bolland. 932 F.

were astonished at the sublimity of his thoughts and views, and looked upon him even then as a Saint. At this time he took for his spiritual reading Surio's Lives of the Saints, for which he felt a special attraction. He was sometimes invited out to dine, but could never be induced to sit next a lady or remain alone with her. On being pressed to do so, he replied: "I cannot help it, I have such a dislike for women." [1]

It was here at Mantua that Aloysius first began to show symptoms of strangury [2]. The physicians prescribed a very strict diet, and he himself took their advice so seriously that it is a marvel he did not die of starvation. A whole egg was the very most that he ate at one meal, but he allowed himself this "feast", as he called it, very rarely. The threatened disease was certainly checked by this treatment, but his general health was completely weakened and undermined. He had been a sturdy, healthy boy until then, but he now began to grow very thin, and a weakness of the stomach ensued from which he never recovered. In vain did the physicians contradict their former directions. He considered it incumbent upon him to continue for the good of his soul what he had begun for the well-being of his body. He had accustomed himself to this self-denying mode of life, and found it sweet and pleasant now that he followed it from love of God. The weakness and indisposition from which he now constantly suffered debarred him from the recreations and amusements in which his rank and his father's express desire had formerly compelled him to take part. This was for him a further reason for clinging to his abstinence.

One other important event occurred during Aloysius' sojourn in Mantua. Up to this he had never thought of

---

[1] Ib. 930 A. 962 B. [2] Ib. 941 D.

forsaking the world. But now the idea of renouncing a secular career and consecrating himself to the service of the Church took possession of his mind. He had already renounced marriage by the vow of chastity which he had taken at Florence; and now he began to form a plan of resigning his claim to the Marquisate in favour of his brother. After careful reflection, he finally resolved to devote himself entirely to God's service and take Holy Orders, in order to enjoy greater peace of soul and complete freedom to do good. He did not yet tell his father of this, but contented himself for the present with requesting to be dispensed from the obligations of court life, in order to be able to devote himself entirely to his studies.

Thus this winter sojourn in Mantua was brightened by the dawn of his future vocation. The great austerity and penance of which he was to be such a glorious model began here in quite a natural way, in the measures taken by the physicians to check the progress of the disease with which he was threatened. The defect of nature was turned to advantage by grace. He found light and freedom in self-denial, and, pressing onwards and upwards to heaven, he turned towards it like the flower to the sun. Here in Mantua, where all the great traditions of his family should have bound him to earth, where his warlike and art-loving ancestors had planted their trophies of victory, won in the great battles of the world, had raised buildings and monuments that were masterpieces of art; here, where everything urged him to a secular career and the kingdom of earthly glory was displayed before him, Aloysius felt the world fade and wither in his esteem, its loss seemed to him a gain, and the renunciation of a Marquisate none too high a price to pay for the right to serve God in Holy Church, His Bride. And it was in Mantua, too, where he had first conceived the idea, that he finally made this re-

nunciation. How marvellously God guides His Saints to their goal! He "conducted the just.... through the right ways, and showed him the kingdom of God" (Wisd. x. 10).

6. The Twofold Source of the Spiritual Life.

(Castiglione 1580.)

Aloysius' princely relatives went, as usual, in the summer of the year 1580, to their country villas on the shores of Lago di Garda; for at this season the heat is very great in Mantua, and the morasses near the city and its low-lying situation make it also very unhealthy. The Marquis, who had naturally heard of his eldest son's indisposition, wrote to him, telling him to go to Castiglione. He thought that Aloysius would soon recover under his mother's care in the fresh, bracing mountain air. Donna Martha had already by the 26th of April 1580 returned to Castiglione from Monferrato, whither she had accompanied her husband, and she received her sons on their arrival towards the end of June. Great was her joy on seeing them after their long separation [1], but great also her alarm on perceiving how thin and weak Aloysius had grown. She reproached his tutor, but he was not to blame. He could only reply that his pupil would not be interfered with in this respect [2]. His mother now tried what she could do, and begged the physicians to persuade her son to give up or at least abate his severe fasts. But it was all in vain. He, on the contrary, increased his austerities, for he thought the spiritual profit he derived from this abstinence well worth the physical indisposition it occasioned [3].

[1] Bolland. 851 F. — Aloysius' mother had only seen him once, and for a very short time, during his long absence. *Schröder* 350.

[2] Ib. 933 B.

[3] Ib. 897 C. We can only suppose that Aloysius did not regard the persuasions of his mother and the physicians as an actual

Aloysius remained in weak health for a considerable time, and this caused him to seclude himself more and more from intercourse with the world, and to spend his time in spiritual reading and prayer. He had as yet received no instruction in the practice of mental prayer. But Almighty God, seeing him so earnestly bent upon seeking Him alone, so detached from earthly things and well prepared for Divine favours, imparted Himself to him and led him to contemplation. A glorious and hitherto unsuspected interior life was opened out to Aloysius in meditation upon the mysteries of the Redemption and contemplation of the Divine attributes. He spent half an hour, an hour, or even longer in meditation, according to his inclination or opportunity, and with such profound emotion and interior light that he was often dissolved in tears, which saturated his clothes and bathed the very floor of his room. He often used three or four handkerchiefs in a day[1]. These things did not escape the notice of his attendants, whose curiosity prompted them to watch him secretly. To their great edification, they saw Aloysius cast himself on the ground before his crucifix and kneel for hours, with his arms sometimes crossed on his breast, sometimes wide outstretched, whilst the tears rolled down his cheeks, and his sighs could be heard outside the door. Reports of this spread abroad, and even strangers who visited the castle sometimes contrived to be witnesses of Aloysius absorbed in prayer. Sometimes he would remain standing, lost in thought and apparently insensible to his surroundings, so that he did not even notice if the servants knocked at his door or passed through the room. Whether

---

command, but, on the other hand, regarded the impulse he felt to continue his austerities as a sign of the Will of God.

[1] Bolland. 963 E.

walking or driving, he was always rapt in prayer, and was often heard to greet Our Lady at every step when mounting the stairs. Later on, he learnt a definite and excellent method of meditation from a little book of Blessed Peter Canisius S. J., in which he found practical instructions upon mental prayer. This book was of great assistance to him, and helped him to make great progress in prayer and in the love of God.

About this time Aloysius first began to think of entering the Society of Jesus. He was drawn towards it partly by this book of B. Peter Canisius, and partly by reading the Letters from the Indies, in which the Jesuit missionaries described the results of their work there and in Japan, where, a few years before, the kingdoms of Saxuma, Omura, Bungo and Arima had received the faith. From these letters Aloysius caught the spirit of apostolic zeal that inspired them, and it completely filled his heart. He began to practise it at once, by instructing poor little children in the Catechism on Sundays and feast-days, and did this with such charity and skill that all felt encouraged to be fervent in the service of God. If he heard that anyone in Castiglione was leading a bad life, he constantly pursued him with reproofs and persuasions, in order to convert him to God. He would not suffer any dissension, oaths or immoral conduct among his attendants. But from this time he devoted himself especially to the apostolate of spiritual conversation. He spoke, in fact, of nothing but spiritual matters. He had to accompany his mother about this time on a visit to Christina, Duchess of Lorraine[1]; and the

[1] Christina was the daughter of King Christian of Denmark. She married first Duke Francis Sforza of Milan, and after his death Duke Francis of Lorraine (1544). Her daughter Dorothy married Duke Eric II. of Brunswick. These ladies were both at this time in Dertona, near Alessandria, which was allotted to Christina as her dower.

company were so struck by his words, that a lady said one would think it was an old man who spoke, and not a child of thirteen [1].

This year 1580 brought Aloysius a great happiness and much advancement in the spiritual life. St. Charles Borromeo had been appointed some years before by Pope Gregory XIII. to act as Visitor of the dioceses subject to his archbishopric. This year he was making a visitation of the diocese of Brescia, in which Castiglione lay. In order to avoid unnecessary outlay the Cardinal travelled with only ten attendants, seven mounted and three on foot, whose expenses he helped to defray [2]. As his sister Camilla had married Don Cæsar Gonzaga-Guastalla [3], St. Charles had intimate relations with the family of Gonzaga. Nevertheless he could not be induced to stay at the Castle of Castiglione, but accepted the hospitality of the Archpriest of SS. Celsus and Nazarius. A few hours after the Cardinal's arrival, Aloysius appeared to pay his respects to him, in the absence of the Marquis. One Saint immediately recognized the other. The Cardinal took Aloysius to his private sitting-room, had a long conversation with him, and was astonished at the effects wrought by grace in this child, without any exterior guidance. Aloysius, on his part, who had heard so much of the Cardinal's sanctity, opened his whole heart to him, begged for instruction and guidance in the spiritual life, and received every word of the Archbishop's as the voice of God. St. Charles recommended Aloysius to study in particular the Catechism of the Council of Trent, and asked if he had already made his First Communion. Aloysius replied in the negative. The Cardinal

---

[1] Bolland. 933 C.

[2] *Silvain*, Hist. de S. Charles B. II 304 312 313.

[3] *Rittershusii* Duces Mantuae tab. D.

First Communion of St. Aloysius.

then instructed him in preparation for this great grace, which he would not allow to be longer postponed, and gave him this Divine food himself on the 22nd of July, the feast of St. Mary Magdalen, during the public Mass in the parish Church. Who can say with what emotions of love and devotion the holy boy received his Eucharistic Lord, and what graces our Saviour showered upon his soul!

A new life had now begun for Aloysius. He followed the advice of the holy prelate, and devoted himself most assiduously to the study of the Catechism of the Council of Trent, from which he derived so much edification, enlightenment and encouragement that he thought he could not do better than recommend this truly excellent book to others. Henceforth he communicated frequently, always preparing himself by a humble confession and redoubled fervour. He devoted the whole of the previous day to prayer, spiritual reading, and meditation upon the Blessed Sacrament, directing all his pious practices to this end. When he approached the Sacred Table, his recollection and devotion were an example to all who were present. He spent a long time in thanksgiving; indeed, the Holy Eucharist now became the centre of his whole life. His devotion to It was so great that, when hearing Mass, he was moved to tears at the consecration, especially on festivals and on his Communion days. This gift of tears never left him again throughout his life.

It is a great step gained in the spiritual life, to have acquired a love of mental prayer and facility in it, together with a real devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. The flower of holiness grows apace when watered by these sources of life. Aloysius obtained one of these graces through a Saint, the other directly from the Holy Ghost, but neither of them was gained without his own co-operation. It must never be forgotten that there is an intimate relation between

corporal austerities and facility and consolation in prayer. In proportion as the sources of sensual pleasures are checked, the fountains of spiritual consolation are opened with Divine liberality, and copious floods of heavenly sweetness stream into the detached human heart, thirsting for its God, through the medium of prayer and Holy Communion. These gifts of tears and sweet consolation were a reward to Aloysius for the purity of his youth, and at the same time a source of strength for the hard and thorny path he had still to tread.

What a charming picture is this meeting of the two Saints! How touching to see Charles Borromeo, the man of austere penance, a great prelate and one of the principal reformers of the life of the Church, whose time and thoughts were so fully occupied by his pastoral cares, devoting himself to this boy, introducing him to a fuller knowledge of the faith and the blessings of the Eucharistic mystery, and himself giving the Bread of Angels for the first time to this pure child, so angelic in his innocence. In Aloysius, with his burning devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, we see a typical child of his time, that happy age now about to dawn, when streams of grace flowed more copiously from this Sacred Mystery, because devotion to It and pious reception of It were increasing among the Christian people, and the devastation and desolation wrought by the mad and criminal attacks made upon the Holy Eucharist in so many Christian lands were already beginning to be repaired. Aloysius was one of the first-fruits of this better age, which at last said with the Psalmist: "I will go unto the altar of God; to God who giveth joy to my youth" (Ps. xlii. 4).

In the old Jesuit Church of San Fedele in Milan there is still to be seen a painting well worthy of notice, representing the First Communion of St. Aloysius. The artist,

Francis de Cairo, drew his figures from the family portraits at Castiglione, which were placed at his disposal for this purpose, so that his picture contains likenesses of real historic value [1]. The central figure is Aloysius himself, then a child of about twelve, kneeling to receive the Holy Eucharist from St. Charles Borromeo. He is dressed in the graceful costume of the period, a tight-fitting Spanish doublet, short breeches puffed at the thighs, a stiff ruffle round his neck, and a short cloak [2]. He is full of devotion, gazing with expectant longing at the Sacred Host held out to him. His features are delicate and finely traced; the face is that of a Saint. Even his outstretched hands seem to express an invitation to his Heavenly Guest. His mother kneels behind him; she seems to be offering her son to our Saviour, and resembles Aloysius in features as well as in intensity of devotion and joy. Her dark-coloured dress is relieved by little ruffles at the wrists and a larger one at the neck. Her hair is curled, and nearly hidden under a dainty cap [3]. At her side kneels Don Ferdinand in full armour as a General. The veteran soldier is radiant with happiness, his hands are devoutly folded, and he regards his Aloysius with a glance in which seem to mingle piety, emotion, and a touch of regret as he thinks of his own life, which has not been passed in such innocence as that of his angelic boy. The figure of St. Charles is also painted from life. On the right and left are seen acolytes, among them little Rudolph Gonzaga, holding a torch. A cushion, upon which is embroidered the family coat-of-arms, lies upon the altar-steps. This coat-of-arms is a white shield, divided by a red cross into four quarters, in each of which is an

---

[1] Bolland. 933.

[2] *Heyden*, Tracht der Kulturvölker Europas 173—176.

[3] *Falke*, Kostümgeschichte der Kulturvölker 303—304.

eagle. On a smaller, heart-shaped shield in the centre is seen a white lion with a golden crown, and three black stripes on a gold ground. The motto is: "Fides — Olympos!" "Faith — Heaven!" Truly a summary of the whole life of Aloysius, the noblest scion of a noble race.

7. A Step Onwards.

(Casale, at the end of summer, 1580.)

The Marquis, who was still in Monferrato [1], was much disquieted at the reports which reached him of his eldest son's failing health. He thought he could do more to check the cause of the trouble if he had the sufferer near him, and therefore sent word to the Marchioness towards the end of the summer of 1580 to come to him with Aloysius and Rudolph. They probably passed through Milan, travelling in a coach, a primitive form of which had just come into fashion. Before this time people had journeyed on foot or on horseback [2]. Between Milan and Casale they had to cross the Ticino, which in consequence of heavy rains had overflowed its banks. The carriage in which the Marchioness travelled had already reached the opposite bank in safety, and was driving on, when suddenly the vehicle in which Aloysius, Rudolph, and their tutor were sitting broke in two in the middle of the stream. The front part of the carriage, in which Rudolph was, was pulled safely to the shore; but the back part, with Aloysius and the tutor, was carried down the swollen stream, and both would have been lost, had not their piece of the

[1] The Marquisate of Monferrato lay between Genoa, Milan, and Piedmont, and had been inherited first by a younger branch of the Imperial House of Greece (1306), and later on by the Duke of Mantua (1536).

[2] *Hübner*, Sixtus V. I 85.

carriage struck against a large trunk of a tree that was floating on the water, and remained fast. A man rode quickly into the middle of the stream, and, placing Aloysius behind him on the horse, brought him safely to the shore. He then returned and rescued the tutor in the same manner. There was a little chapel of Our Lady in the vicinity, and the party hastened thither to return thanks to God for their preservation. They halted again in Vigevano, to dry their clothes and prepare for the rest of the journey. Aloysius' mother had hurried back in terror at the first rumour of the accident; the news had spread even to Casale, and the anxiety of the Marquis was only allayed by the arrival of his wife and children.

Casale di Monferrato, the capital of the Marquisate, where the Governor resided, had been the scene of Aloysius' soldier-days in his earliest childhood. It is situated on undulating hills on the right bank of the river Po, and was long considered one of the most strongly fortified towns in Italy.

Aloysius here devoted his time principally to his classical studies, and made very good progress in the ancient languages. His earnest, solid mind displayed itself even in the choice of classical authors. Never was he seen to indulge in light reading. His favourite writers were Seneca, Plutarch, and Valerius Maximus. He was in the habit of copying out extracts from their works which he thought he could make use of in conversation, to encourage others to practise virtue and strive after perfection. But in spite of his liking for these pagan authors, he still preferred to read spiritual works, such as those of Louis of Granada and Lipomano.

The Marquis did all he could to induce Aloysius to abandon his earnest, austere and abstemious mode of life, and spared no pains to distract him by festivals and public

amusements of all kinds. His position as Governor compelled him to organize these, for in spite of the misery that prevailed in many parts, it was a pomp and pleasure loving age; but it had at least the advantage of allowing the people to take part in the merry-making with the princes and nobles. There were tournaments, tilting at the ring, foot and horse-racing, pageants of gods, heroes and saints on moving mountains, clouds, and rocks; sham fights on land or water, fairylike fire-works with suns, moons, stars, and airy sprites breathing out fire [1]. The pièces de résistance of these festivals, however, were always plays and masques. There were no theatres as yet; a large room or hall in a palace, or a public square was decorated for the purpose with the most beautiful stage scenery. The actors wore very costly costumes. The longer dramas were interspersed with little farces, pantomimes, music and singing. Unhappily the plays were not always of the most edifying kind [2]. Even the princesses at Ferrara acted in old Roman comedies. But it was in dancing that the 16th century surpassed all others. Dancing-masters now came into fashion, and one is tempted to call it the age of dancing, when one reads of the hundred various dances known, from the stately minuet to the mad capriole [3].

All these forms of amusement awaited Aloysius; nay, at the instance of his father, they even pursued him. But without being disobedient, he always contrived to avoid

---

[1] *Reumont,* Geschichte der Stadt Rom III 465—468 785—795. *Burckhardt,* Kultur der Renaissance in Italien 417 f. *Hurter,* Ferdinand II. III 83—90.

[2] *Reumont* III 133—139. *Hübner,* Sixtus V. II 144. *Burckhardt* 315 ff.

[3] *Lacroix,* Mœurs, usages et costumes au moyen-âge 269.

them. He shunned plays and dances, indeed all occasions where he would have been obliged to meet ladies, a good number of whom constantly came to Casale in order to see him and be seen by him [1]. If he had to accompany his mother to any festival, he only went to the place with her, and then asked permission to go away, only returning in time to fetch her home [2]. In the meantime he would visit the little chapel of Our Lady of Crea, or go to the Capuchin monastery or that of St. Hilary; but oftener still he went to see the Barnabite Fathers, with whom he could converse to his heart's content on spiritual subjects or about his studies. As he visited them so often, and seemed to take such pleasure in their society, and also went to Confession and Communion in their church, these Fathers began to think he intended to join their Order. But this was a mistake, although he was certainly thinking seriously at this time about the religious life. What pleased him so much in these religious was their concord, their gaiety of manner, the regularity and quiet of their life, their great contempt of earthly things, and their readiness to die. One day in particular, when in their monastery, he was thinking very earnestly of embracing religion. Let us hear the account of it he has given us himself in his notes [3].

"See, Aloysius, how happy is the life of a religious! These Fathers are free from all the snares of the world, and far removed from occasions of sin. The time that most other men spend in acquiring perishable riches and vain enjoyments is employed by them in storing up imperishable treasures, and thus they gain great merit in God's

[1] Bolland. 930 A. [2] Ib. 937 C.

[3] Cf. Die Schriften des hl. Aloysius, übersetzt von *Heuser*, Köln 1850, 67 ff. Bolland. 934 E f.

eyes and secure His favour for ever. They have no need to fear that the labour they undergo for their sanctification will be lost. Religious are guided by reason in the ordering of their lives; they are not swayed by the concupiscence of the senses. They are not ambitious, they strive after no honours; they have no esteem for earthly, perishable things; they are not jealous of others, nor do they envy any man his goods. They are happy in serving God alone, whom to serve is to reign. No wonder, then, that they are always happy and at peace, and fear neither death, nor judgment, nor the torments of hell; for they have no mortal sin upon their souls, but are busy night and day amassing heavenly treasures, since they are always occupied in doing some good work for God or with God. From the testimony of their good conscience springs peace and tranquillity reflected even in the joyousness of their countenances, and a firm hope of eternal life. What joy do they not feel at the thought of Him Whom they serve and in Whose court they dwell!"

"What are you doing, and what are you thinking of? Why can you not choose this state of life? Think of the great rewards God has promised to it! Think how much time and opportunity you would have to attend to the welfare of your soul! If you carry out your resolution and yield the Marquisate to your brother Rudolph, and yet remain with him, you may have to see many things done of which you cannot approve. Will you shut your eyes to them? If you do, your conscience will continually reproach you with neglecting your duty. If you blame him, he will pay no heed to you, or else grow impatient. Do you think you will attain your end by becoming a priest and living like other secular ecclesiastics? On the contrary, you will have taken upon yourself graver obligations than a layman, and yet be exposed to the same and in

a certain sense greater dangers than those in holy matrimony. You will find it impossible to avoid hearing the views of worldly-minded men, conforming to their manners and yielding to their wishes; for if you allow yourself to be persuaded to remain in the world, your social position will oblige you to visit first one prince and then another. If you shun the society of your female relatives and other ladies, you will excite remark; if you mix with them, you will break your resolution. If you accept high offices in the Church you will have far more cares to perplex you than at present; if you refuse them, your relatives will be displeased, will say you are a disgrace to the family, and do all they can to overcome your reluctance."

"But if you join a religious Order, you will cut off all these fetters with one stroke; you will put aside all hindrances, free yourself from all considerations of human respect, and be able to enjoy perfect peace and serve God perfectly."

As Aloysius often related in after life, all these thoughts were constantly in his mind at this time, and even those around him could not help noticing that he was preoccupied with something of great importance, though no one ventured to question him on the subject. After many prayers and Communions offered for this intention, he at last came to the conclusion that this call to religious life came from God. He felt equally sure that at his age — not quite thirteen — he would never obtain his father's consent. He therefore spoke to no one of his resolve, and did not as yet decide upon any particular Order; but he determined to live for the future as much as possible like a religious. He lived in greater retirement than ever, dividing his time between study and prayer. If he was disturbed when praying in his own room, he took refuge in a little out-of-the-way room where the chambermaids

used to dress, and locked himself in [1]. He would have no fire in his own room, and when he was obliged to be in a warm apartment, he sought out the place farthest away from the hearth. His hands were so tender that they were often swollen and chapped with cold; but although he always accepted very gratefully the remedies offered him, he laid them aside and never used them.

Aloysius' father was annoyed at seeing his eldest son so fond of retirement, and constantly tried to inspire him with a liking for princely amusements and pleasures. There was on one occasion a great review of cavalry at Milan, and the Marquis required Aloysius to attend the brilliant spectacle, to which all the nobility were flocking and striving for the best places. He was obliged to go, as his father insisted upon it, but could not be persuaded to take a seat in the front rows, preferring to keep as much in the background as possible. Whilst the smart regiments were galloping past with flags flying, amid the blare of trumpets and bugles and the beating of drums, executing all kinds of manœuvres before the eager and admiring onlookers, Aloysius sat with eyes cast down, and saw but little more of it all than if he had been sitting over his books at home. He was no longer the four-year-old child who had taken such delight in the booming guns and waving flags and plumes, and in all the gay uniforms and exercises of the soldiers. What was it all to him now? He felt at home only in his study, a church or a convent, and cared only for pious conversation, spiritual reading, and intercourse with God in prayer. "The Lord is the portion of my inheritance and of my cup" (Ps. xv. 5).

---

[1] Bolland. 937 C.

8. The Victim in the Briars of Mortification.

(Castiglione 1581.)

During the year 1581 the Marquis's term of office as Governor of Monferrato expired, so he returned with his family to Castiglione in the spring, and remained there until the autumn.

These changes of residence, however, did not lead Aloysius to change his manner of life. He was everywhere the same. But probably he preferred the quiet of Castiglione to gay Casale, and now that he was in his own home he increased his austerities and prayers to an almost terrifying extent. Perhaps another reason for this was the dismissal of his tutor, for at about this time he was declared to be grown up and his own master. On the 21st of May 1581 the grateful youth wrote to his "dearest friend" Peter Francis del Turco, who was then in Florence, the following characteristic lines: "I have received your most welcome letter. The only thing I did not like in it was that you should think me so foolish as to be annoyed or angered by words which could only increase my love for you. That was not the case, and never will be; but I shall always remember you, wherever I may be. I have given the 75 soldini that I owed you to your brother; let me know if there is anything more. In conclusion I greet you and beg to be remembered to James, Bastiano, the Lady Mary, little John, and Angelino." [1]

In order to gain a correct idea of the degree of mortification and retirement practised by Aloysius in his ancestral home, we must cast a glance at the mode of life led by those around him.

The 16th century was a pleasure-loving age. The old castles and fortresses, the ancestral seats of the nobility,

[1] *Fozzi,* Lettere di S. L. G. 7.

had lost most of their stern exterior; instead of strong fortifications, they were now splendid palaces, with a gay and pleasing appearance. In the court-yards jostled a crowd of lacqueys and outriders, and a number of all kinds of pet animals was to be seen; for it was the fashion of the day to keep jesters, strange birds and beasts [1]. A narrow staircase led from the court-yard to the servants' hall, and thence one was conducted by a chamberlain through various other rooms to the vestibule of the noble family's private apartments. The ceilings of these rooms were vaulted, and adorned with frescoes or elegantly-carved, richly-gilded woodwork. The upper part of the walls was also frescoed, the lower part hung with cordwain tapestry wrought with gold, or Flemish embroidery. The rooms were full of old and new works of art: statues, pictures, costly cabinets of ebony inlaid with gold, silver, and precious stones, paintings on metal and marble, great vases or bowls of majolica, and richly-bound books. The furniture was of finely-carved wood, inlaid with other material. In the sleeping apartments there were richly-gilt iron bedsteads, with curtains of silk damask or satin, adorned with gold and silver trimmings or embroidered with the family coat-of-arms. Carpets were spread beside the beds, and velvet cushions lay on the prie-dieus, placed before silver crucifixes. In the scantily-lighted "stanze" the noble family assembled with their guests.

The ladies sat on reclining-chairs or settees covered with silk and damask, ranged along the walls. They wore costly robes, with tight sleeves puffed at the shoulders, and were adorned with chains and strings of pearls; valuable fans, gloves, and pointed shoes worked with silk and gold completed their gay attire. The gentlemen stood in groups,

[1] *Burckhardt,* Kultur der Renaissance in Italien 290.

discussing the events of the day. They carried rapiers; their head-dress was a little cap or bonnet of velvet or silk, with a narrow brim, a rich band and a little plume; a stiff little mantle, falling back from the shoulders, displayed the tight-fitting doublet and knee-breeches. Instead of the mantle, a Spanish cape with a hood and short full sleeves was often worn [1]. In the dining-hall stood a side-board decked with gold and silver utensils, often of very rich and artistic design. On the table was an epergne sparkling with gold. The noble guests ate only from silver dishes, and if the host were a prince, only noblemen were allowed to serve at table. Wine was handed in goblets, and everyone mixed it according to his taste with water from a silver decanter, presented to him by waiters in rich liveries. The favourite wines were the strong vintages of Greece and Naples. The culinary achievements of the day were certainly not suited to weak digestions. The number of courses depended upon the rank of the guests and their host, and upon the dignity of the festival. Pasties, feathered fowl, capons cooked in bottles, fish, game, meat, preserved fruits, and sweet dishes of all kinds succeeded each other in terrifying abundance. And here in the juxtaposition and succession of the most glaring contrasts there prevailed a kind of Lucullan eccentricity. Before dessert the table was cleared and then removed, disclosing another underneath it, spread with all kinds of delicacies — sugared eggs and syrups that exhaled an almost stupefying perfume. At last the meal ended, and was followed by merry recreations such as dancing, games, masquerades and music [2].

Such were the customs of that age in the houses of the great, and probably also at the Castle of Castiglione.

[1] *Heyden*, Tracht der Kulturvölker Europas 173 f.

[2] *Hübner*, Sixtus V. II 137—140. *Reumont*, Geschichte der Stadt Rom III 458 797.

Amid such surroundings and allurements, Aloysius led the life of a hermit. He would have nothing costly for his person or his room. The latter was by no means large [1], the bed simple [2], his apparel more than simple. In particular he avoided all intercourse with ladies. If his mother sent one of her ladies-in-waiting to him with a message, he would not suffer her to enter his room, but heard what she had to say at the half-opened door, and dismissed her as quickly as possible. He even disliked to be alone with his mother, and when others left the room he sought some pretext to retire also. He told a gentleman who remonstrated with him about this that it was owing to a natural, inborn shrinking that he could not help. Many of the noble ladies related to him he did not even know by sight. He had made a sort of agreement with his father to fulfil all his wishes readily, if only he would not ask him to visit ladies. And the Marquis had the good sense not to force his inclination, so that he was soon jestingly called the woman-hater.

In addition to following the strictly abstemious diet that he had begun in Mantua and continued ever since, Aloysius now began to observe three fast-days every week, taking nothing but bread and water on Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays. On special occasions these three days did not satisfy his fervour, and he added others. His servants secretly weighed the food he took at one meal, and found that it did not exceed an ounce, morning and evening. During the last few years of his secular life he had it weighed himself, and could never be prevailed upon to take more than the quantity once fixed; for he said that was enough to sustain life, and anything more was superfluous. He always took only what seemed most unpalatable, and would not touch

[1] Bolland. 937 E. [2] Ib. 940 E.

anything else, as his carver and special attendant noticed and afterwards testified.

But Aloysius began about this time to practise other austerities also. He disciplined himself three times in the week, later on daily, and even several times a day, even to blood. As he had no proper discipline at first, he used dogs' leashes or even chains, and also fastened spurs together and wore them round his body like a girdle. Not content with these penances, he laid pieces of wood in his bed.

He prayed so much that his servants could never enter his room without finding him thus engaged, and they often had to wait for hours in the antechamber until he had finished. He began the day with meditation, after which he recited his ordinary vocal prayers and heard Mass. During the day he often attended Divine Office with the religious of Castiglione, read good books, and occupied himself, even whilst otherwise engaged, with the subject of his morning meditation. He was scarcely ever seen downstairs in the reception or recreation rooms. Before retiring to bed he again spent an hour or more in meditation. Indeed, he very often passed a great part of the night in prayer, and in such a manner as to crucify his flesh anew. Clad only in his nightshirt, although shivering with cold, he would kneel for hours in his room, until he could no longer kneel upright and fell to the ground from weakness. But he did not mind this, and persevered until he had overcome all sensitiveness to cold and could apply his mind to prayer under any circumstances.

This excessive fasting and continual mental strain naturally had a most pernicious effect upon his already delicate health. He contracted severe headaches, which caused him acute suffering, and from which he was never again completely free. But far from doing anything to relieve them,

he deliberately tried to increase the pain, because it reminded him of the crown of thorns worn by our Blessed Lord, and thus as he said gave him an opportunity of gaining merit for heaven, without as a rule interfering with his occupations. It must always be a subject of astonishment that such excessive austerity at such a tender age did not put an end to his life; this probably was only due to the special Providence of God, who delighted in bestowing this reward on a soul so well-pleasing to Him. Divine Providence was especially manifested in one occurrence at about this time.

Aloysius had been suffering from a headache even more severe than usual, which had obliged him to retire to rest sooner than he was accustomed to do. Suddenly remembering that he had not yet recited the Penitential Psalms as was his custom, he called his servant and bade him place a light beside the bed. He must have either fallen asleep over his prayers or been so absorbed in devotion that he forgot to put out the candle, which either burned down or fell over, so that the bed, the mattress, two coverlets and the bed-curtain caught fire, but fortunately only smouldered, without bursting into flames. Aloysius awoke, but attributed the heat he felt to fever until it became intolerable, and the suffocating smoke roused him to a sense of the danger. Scarcely had he opened the door and called for help, when the whole bed broke into a blaze. All were awakened by his cry for help; the servants and soldiers hurried in and threw the burning bed out of the window into the moat, thus preventing any further damage. Needless to say, everyone regarded the boy's deliverance on this occasion as due to supernatural intervention [1]. As Aloysius himself acknowledged later, he

[1] Bolland. 940 E. F. 941 A.

experienced the Divine protection not only in this case, but in a thousand others, and however hopeless the matters might seem about which he prayed, whether his own concerns or his father's, never were his prayers unanswered.

Another fruit of this life of prayer and penance was an almost heavenly elevation of soul which made him look upon everything earthly as infinitely mean and unworthy of consideration. When he saw the pomp and splendour displayed in the castles of the neighbouring nobility, he could scarcely help smiling, especially when he saw that people set great store by all this and thought themselves great and happy on that account. "How can we pride ourselves upon our high birth?" he would say. "What is the difference between the dust of a prince and that of a pauper?" [1] Only those appeared to him truly great who renounced and forsook all for God. He would say to his mother in confidence: "Why does not everyone become a religious? They would be much better off for time and eternity. The enjoyments of this life are so short, and those that indulge in them have to suffer for it during life and after death." When he heard that anyone had embraced the religious life, his face became radiant with joy. The more he shunned intercourse with the world, the more attached he became to the priests and religious who resided in Castiglione or came thither on a visit, especially the Benedictines and the Dominicans. He conversed with them on spiritual subjects, and was overjoyed when they gave him little presents of devotional objects, such as rosaries, Agnus Dei etc.

A third fruit of Aloysius' isolation from the world was a great interior union with God, which passed into a sort of quiet ecstasy on the slightest occasion. As soon as he

[1] Bolland. 938 B.

entered a church or saw a holy picture, his heart and senses became absorbed in contemplation, and it was some time before he recovered himself sufficiently to answer the questions put to him. His companions even tell us of ecstasies that overtook him in the midst of the noise and bustle of the inns where he stayed when on a journey [1]. He experienced extraordinary emotions of love and joy when he heard the name of Our Blessed Lady. He was often heard to say: "Oh, if I could only love God as His majesty deserves! What must be the joy of heaven, since a word about Him can make one so happy here below!" [2]

Such was the life of this child, this prince's son of the 16th century; in every respect a contrast to the frivolity of the age. How many pleasures and enjoyments stood at his command, nay, forced themselves upon him! And who cared less for them, or rejected them with more sternness and resolution? Did he not understand how to live poor in the midst of riches, abstemious in the midst of luxury, unnoticed in the midst of honours, mortified, uncomfortable, nay, suffering in every respect? The inventive resourcefulness he showed in this was truly astounding. Would the youngest stable-boy in the retinue of the Marquis have been willing to lead such a life? Aloysius presents a picture of the greatest renunciation, austerity and self-denial, in the midst of the joys of the world, and one may well ask in astonishment how his parents came to permit him to maltreat and torture himself so mercilessly. The attendants repeatedly showed his mother the linen he had worn, soaked with blood. His father came and saw the place where he had prayed during the night, all bedewed with tears; he heard of the superhuman austerities practised by Aloysius, and said,

[1] Bolland. 937 D. [2] Ib. 938 F.

with a shake of the head: "The boy will kill himself before he has done." Still, no steps were taken to prevent it, and we must recognize in this circumstance also a wise permission of Providence. Aloysius was to set the world an example of penance practised by a pure and innocent soul; nay, he was to be the victim of penance for the sins of the world. That was his vocation. God had chosen this child as a sacrificial lamb — what did it signify, if the duration of his earthly pilgrimage was shortened a few years by the severity of his penance? Besides the general reasons for his penitential zeal, participation in the Cross and merits of Jesus Christ, Aloysius himself gives a special and personal motive. In the notes written by him at a later period, we find the following passage: "The pillars of heaven have fallen; who can promise me that I shall persevere? *The world is now full of iniquity; who shall appease the wrath of the Almighty?* Very many priests and religious think but little of their vocation. How can God suffer longer such a devastation of His kingdom? The faithful rob Him of His honour by the great tepidity and carelessness of their lives; who is to make reparation? Woe to the worldlings, who put off their penance till the hour of their death; and woe also to the clergy who slumber on until then! Such thoughts ought to rouse us from our lethargy and renew in us the resolution to do penance and serve God with constancy and sincerity." [1]

The 16th century had indeed horrors enough to answer for: the terrible apostasy caused by the schism throughout the whole of northern Europe; bloody revolt against Church and State in France, Germany, Belgium and Switzerland; atrocious public crimes like the massacre of St. Bartholomew, the murder of the unfortunate Mary Queen of Scots and

[1] Various pious thoughts. Bolland. 991 E.

the Guises, the pillage of Rome, the devastation of churches and everything sacred, the robbery and destruction or dissolution of monasteries and sacrilegious profanation of the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, the infringement of monastic vows and sacerdotal celibacy, the seizure of church lands and bloody persecution of Catholics, to say nothing of the frivolity and worldliness that prevailed among all classes, from the lowest to the highest. Such crimes and such a general condition of things could only be atoned for by tears and blood. It was this spirit of reparation that Aloysius made his aim, together with all those who earnestly desired reform and made efforts to bring it about. In fact, this spirit is merely the spirit of Christianity itself, the fundamental principle of which is the truth and reality of the atonement made for us by Christ. Aloysius was truly the victim in the briars of penance and renunciation.

9. At the Court of Madrid.

(1581—1584.)

Since the great wars between Charles V. and Francis I. of France, the French had lost their influence in Italy. The Italian princes gave their allegiance to the Emperor and to Philip II. of Spain; to the Emperor, because most of the principalities were imperial fiefs, and to Philip, because he was the actual ruler of Milan, Sardinia, Naples, and Sicily, and, being the most powerful monarch of his day, he attracted everyone round his banner. Madrid, rather than Prague, was the centre of political life at this time. There, if anywhere, honours, riches, and good position were to be sought. Philip readily took advantage of every opportunity to draw the Italian princes to his court and thus retain their allegiance. Some years previously, Italian princes had escorted the two Archdukes Rudolph and Ernest

to Madrid, to be educated there; and perhaps it may have been on this occasion that the Marquis Ferdinand first came to the Spanish Court.

In the year 1581, an opportunity presented itself of again going to the Court of his royal patron, this time accompanied by his family. The widowed Empress Mary, daughter of Charles V., wife of the Emperor Maximilian II., and mother of Rudolph, who had been living in Bohemia since the death of her husband, had to return to Madrid, to her brother Philip II. The latter intended to entrust her with the government of Portugal, which he had claimed after the death of King Henry in 1580. He hoped this would make his rule popular in Portugal, as Mary was a granddaughter of the Portuguese King Manuel [1]. The Italian princes through whose territories she passed on her way from Bohemia to Spain were instructed to escort her thither, and it was the Empress's own special wish that the Marchioness Martha of Castiglione should accompany her. The Marquis fulfilled this wish with the utmost readiness, as he was under so many obligations to Philip; and probably he was also actuated by the desire of presenting his children at Court, and thus persuading Aloysius in particular to give up his thoughts of renouncing the world. The former tutor of the latter, Peter Francis del Turco, was again to act as travelling companion. Aloysius wrote to him on the 1st of June 1581, "at 1 o'clock at night":

[1] The Empress did indeed set out for Lisbon soon after her arrival in Madrid, and there rejoined her brother Philip II. (*Jozzi* 15). Other motives for her return to Spain were the unhappy state of ecclesiastical affairs in Austria, which rendered her sojourn there distasteful to her, and also the death of Philip's wife, Queen Anne, which made the presence at Madrid of the Empress very desirable, on account of the royal children, her nephews and nieces. *Schröder* 352.

"Dearest Friend,

I have already written you two letters, one from Mantua and the other from Venice. But as I am in doubt whether you received them, and desire your presence so much, I am sending this one by our Peter (who made 50 leaps into the air at the news), to beg you to come without fail and to start as soon as possible. I assure you that my father, the Marquis, greatly wishes you to come, and we all, especially Julius and myself, desire it very much."

But the days passed, and Del Turco did not come. On the 23rd of June, Aloysius wrote another letter, earnestly begging him to do so, and followed it up on the 25th by a third missive to the same effect[1]. We do not know whether Del Turco really came or not. Time pressed, and so the Marquis, with his wife and five children — Aloysius, Rudolph, Francis, Isabella, and Christian — joined the escort of the Empress. It is certain that he was with her on her arrival in Verona. She was everywhere received with high honour, and the Duke of Ferrara came with four hundred coaches to Padua to greet her, to the no small annoyance of the Venetian Court. In Brescia and Lodi the Empress was met by St. Charles Borromeo, who said Mass in her presence and gave her Holy Communion[2].

---

[1] So, at least, one is bound to conclude, judging from the dates of the letters and the order in which they are arranged (*Fozzi* 8 f). But we are of opinion, judging from internal evidence, that the letters dated June 23rd and 25th were written before the one bearing the date of June 1st, and that this is only a slip of the pen for July 1st. The letter following these in the same collection (ib. 11) also bears a date evidently false, for it was written in the year 1580, not 1581.

[2] *Giusano*, Life of St. Charles Borromeo, Augsburg 1836, Book 6, chap. 11, p. 151.

Thence she continued her journey to Spain by way of Genoa, where Doria, the old Admiral of the Spanish Fleet, took command of the ships which formed her escort (Nov. 8th, 1581). They touched at Marseilles, Collioura, Barcelona, and Saragossa, where an attack of gout obliged the Marquis to remain behind for a time, whilst Aloysius probably went on with the rest of the suite to Madrid [1].

Aloysius' piety was greatly fostered and encouraged by this journey. The pious Empress visited all the famous sanctuaries and places of pilgrimage on the route; she venerated the relics of St. Mary Magdalen in the Church of St. Maximinus at Marseilles, visited her cell at Ste. Baume in Provence, and also the celebrated miraculous image of Our Lady of the Pillar at Saragossa, her picture at Montserrat, and the body of St. Didacus at Alcala [2]. Aloysius saw but little of the rest of the pomp and splendour, the manifold beauties of nature, or the marvels of art and commerce. In the midst of the hurry and confusion of the journey he went quietly along, as he was wont, with eyes cast down, silent and recollected in the presence of God. The attention of the Empress was attracted by this boy of thirteen, and even then she regarded him as a little Saint [3].

On the 7th of March 1582 the party at last reached Madrid, which is situated on the Manzanares, in the bare, red plateau of Castile. Philip had transformed it from a Moorish village into a splendid capital. It bore the stamp of its ruler. Philip was a serious-minded, earnest man; he loved simplicity, and wore a plain black doublet, with no other ornament than the Golden Fleece; he was an

[1] *Schröder* 354—355. *Jozzi* 15.

[2] Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia XVIII, Enero 1891, Cuaderno I, p. 62 f.

[3] *Narbone* 235.

indefatigable worker, but never known to be impatient [1]. Although a sincere Catholic and a faithful son of the Church, he was fully conscious of his own importance in it; he regarded himself not merely as the sword of faith against heresy, but as God's representative in matters temporal, and became thus the occasion of much unpleasantness to the Church [2]. This self-consciousness and want of tact left its mark not only upon the Court, but more or less upon the whole nation, giving to the Spanish character that trait known as "Sosiego", which denotes strong self-consciousness and sleepy indecision [3]. The nobles of the Spanish Court cared little for brilliant banquets and merry-making, but were much addicted to playing for high stakes, to pomp and royal grandeur, costly apparel, fine music and rich collections of works of art. The Spanish Court was then regarded as the school *par excellence* of good breeding, and its fashions gained more and more ground in other countries, especially in Italy, until they gradually made way for the French influence. So it was not amongst bad or frivolous surroundings that Aloysius was now to live, but still it was at a Court addicted to many useless pursuits; and however refined its manners might be, there was much idle trifling and polite flattery, pride of name and rank, worldly gallantry and outward pomp.

Queen Isabella of Spain, whose maid-of-honour Donna Martha had formerly been, had died soon after the departure of the latter for Italy. But her daughters, the Princesses Clara Eugenie and Catherine, were still living, and the Marquis Ferdinand's little daughter Isabella became maid-of-honour to the former. King Philip had married a fourth

---

[1] *Weiss*, Lehrbuch der Weltgeschichte IV, Part 2, p. 713 f.

[2] *Hübner*, Sixtus V. II 60 ff 389.

[3] Ib. I 110.

wife after the death of Queen Isabella, his choice falling this time (in 1570) upon Anne Mary of Austria, daughter of Maximilian II. Of the children of this marriage, two were still living — the Princes James and Philip; and the two sons of the Marquis, Aloysius and Rudolph, now became pages of the first rank to Prince James, the Crown Prince, whilst the Marquis himself entered upon his duties as chamberlain to the King. The pages of the highest rank, to which Aloysius belonged, not only had to accompany the Crown Prince and wait upon him, but received their entire education together with him. Thus the Gonzaga family had now taken up their position at Court, and here, as everywhere, Aloysius set an example of virtue in keeping with his position and the circumstances in which he was placed.

In Madrid he devoted himself, above all, to his studies, pursuing them with zeal and energy. In a short time he had completely mastered the Spanish language, and then passed on to the higher studies. He learned logic and theodicy, and also attended lectures on astronomy and mathematics by Dimas, the king's mathematician. But he would never learn anything at the cost of his innocence. One day he was given a novel to read, for the purpose of perfecting his knowledge of Spanish; but the book instantly found its way into the fire [1]. Two events are recorded of this period, which prove that he made good progress in his studies. Aloysius chanced to be in Alcala when a theological discussion was going on (probably in March 1582), and was invited to take part in the debate. Although only fourteen years of age at the time, he argued with great skill against the thesis that was being defended, trying to prove, of course only for argument's sake, that

[1] Études religieuses LIV (Mai-Août) 26.

the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity could be known by natural reason. Father Gabriel Vasquez S. J., who presided at this discussion, afterwards became Aloysius' teacher of theology at the Roman College of the Society of Jesus, founded about this time (1582). — In the year 1581, after the death of the aged King and Cardinal, Henry of Portugal, King Philip of Spain had laid claim to the throne of that country and subdued the people by force of arms. He claimed the crown in right of his first wife, Mary of Portugal. On his return to Madrid, on the 29th of March 1583, Aloysius was honoured by being chosen to welcome the King in an oration. He composed it in Latin, and acquitted himself of his task very creditably. Philip's illustrious descent, virtues as a ruler, and military triumphs over the Mohammedans, the Moors, the French, Portuguese, and English form the subject of this oration, which is the only one of Aloysius' writings that shows any trace of courtly and classic speech. But how temperate, how modest, and especially how Christian it all is, in comparison with the ordinary panegyrics of that age!

Apart from the exaggerated praises he bestows upon the King, every phrase shows a refined, moderate, and thoroughly well-trained taste in thought and mode of expression. Very perceptible stress is laid upon the Christian standpoint, and it is certainly not without significance that this orator of fifteen, speaking in the century of wars, calls especial attention to the circumstance that Philip's wars had been undertaken in just causes. However much this address differs from the usual purely objective style of the Saint, it is worthy of note that it contained no principles or views of which he need have been ashamed [1].

[1] For the sake of the light it throws upon the character of Aloysius, we give here a faithful translation of the introductory part

It is evident not only that Aloysius was not wanting in talent and ability, but that this must have been known and acknowledged at Court, for otherwise he would neither have been chosen to deliver such an address nor have been appointed to be the companion of the young Crown Prince.

In spite of Aloysius' being so serious and retiring and older than the Prince, the latter became much attached

---

of the address. It will suffice to show that the Saint really had a command of language, and might easily have become a distinguished orator if he had taken a little trouble:

"If Demosthenes, whose very name, according to Valerius Maximus, brings before our minds the ideal of eloquence, was once so overcome by the presence of such a lofty personage as King Philip of Macedonia, the father of Alexander, that directly he began to speak he grew confused and was unable to continue; if Cicero, that fount of eloquence, that prince of the Latin tongue, trembled and grew so pale at the trial of Milo, to whom he owed so much, that he seemed to possess no skill of speech and no trace of eloquence; it is not to be wondered at, o glorious King, if I, in the presence of your Majesty, before whom the whole world bows and to whom I am indebted for so many favours bestowed upon my family, am overcome with admiration and blinded by the splendour of your deeds, so that I now tremble and am filled with fear. For, without possessing the great learning of these orators, I am here to portray, as far as my weak powers are able, and according to truth and merit, the nobility of your race, your distinguished natural abilities, the glorious victories won through your vigilance no less than by your bravery, indeed your whole life, which has been spent in the suppression of insurrection and in the just extension of your kingdom. . . ." Cf. the whole address in the original text (*Cepari*, Vita di S. Luigi Gonzaga, Roma 1862, 465). The manuscript is now in the Jesuit College at Louvain. Benedict XIV. and the postulators of the cause of Aloysius' canonization say of the address very rightly: "Laudat regem prolixe, sed prudenter et a veris virtutibus." (Cepari par *Michel* 302.)

to his new companion. He was once standing beside his little master at a window, when the prince, annoyed by the wind, cried out angrily: "Stupid wind, be still, I command you!" Aloysius, smiling gently, replied with decision: "Your Royal Highness can give commands to men, and they will obey you; but you have no power over the elements, for they are subject only to God, Whom you also are bound to obey." These rather bold words were of course reported to the King, but Philip was sensible enough to recognise the good sense and opportuneness of the answer. Indeed, the maturity of Aloysius' intellect and the quiet composure and modesty of his manners made a great impression even upon old and prominent courtiers, and no one dared to let fall a frivolous word in his presence [1]. It was a common saying among them that the young Marquis was not made of flesh and blood. His outward appearance was one of extreme poverty. Whilst he desired that his attendants should be dressed in a manner suitable to their position, Don Ferdinand had to make many futile representations to him on the subject of his own apparel. At a Court where love of costly raiment seemed inborn, even in men, the son of the Marquis of Castiglione and playfellow of the Heir Apparent went about with patched hose. He was only seen to wear a new garment when Court etiquette strictly required it, and even then it was without ornament of any kind. His father's remonstrances were of as little avail with regard to this as to his other mortifications; and, as no one else made any complaint about it, Don Ferdinand had to let his eldest son have his own way in the matter of clothes. Aloysius was to take lessons in dancing and fencing, too, while at Madrid; but he was an adept at disappearing at

[1] Bolland. 949 E.

the time of these lessons, so that no one could find him [1]. In order to form a correct judgment of this behaviour of the Saint with regard to his parents' wishes and commands, we must necessarily assume that Aloysius acted thus under special inspiration of the Holy Ghost. He, at least, did so in good faith, thinking that parents had not the right to command obedience in such matters, and that everyone must here act upon his own responsibility and decide for himself. Of course such an opinion could not, in point of fact, be reconciled with perfect obedience, and it would be presumptuous for anyone to imitate the Saint in this respect without the permission of a spiritual director.

When Aloysius went out, he was always accompanied by an attendant, and was accustomed to rely upon his guide so completely that he never raised his eyes, and did not know the names of the streets in Madrid or Mantua, or even in Castiglione. Although he had accompanied the Empress Mary to Spain, and had to visit her with the Crown Prince every day as long as he remained at the Court of Madrid, he had only really seen her once, and even then had looked at her so little, that he himself acknowledged that he would not recognise her if he saw her again without being told that she was the Empress. A popular sport peculiar to Spain is the bull-fight. Charles V. himself used to play the matador and kill his bull; and in the reign of Philip II., the Cortes, whilst complaining of the young ladies' novel reading and the introduction of coaches, as tending to effeminacy, earnestly requested the government to promote bull-baiting as a means of encouraging knightly valour and also horse-breeding [2]. Several bull-fights were therefore held at Madrid in the

[1] Ib. 949 C.

[2] *Weiss*, Weltgeschichte IV, Part II, p. 715.

summer months, and Aloysius also was obliged, however unwillingly, to attend them. Once, as he was looking on at one of these combats from the balcony of a house in the large square which, at this time, was used for such popular sports, an infuriated tiger — other animals besides bulls were sometimes used — sprang out of the ring and rushed into the very house where Aloysius and his friends were. All were in mortal terror; but happily the hunted beast dashed through the open door into the cellar, where it was shut in and caught [1].

The demands made upon him by Court life and by his studies caused Aloysius so much distraction, that even his fervour in the spiritual life began to waver a little [2]. But various gracious dispensations of Providence soon led him back to his former standpoint. The first of these was the early death of his young master, Prince James, who succumbed to a fever on the 21st of November 1582. Aloysius went with the funeral cortège that accompanied the body of the prince to its last resting-place in the Escurial. In the midst of the bare, rugged mountains of Guadarrama the gigantic edifice towers aloft, famous at the same time as a palace, a monastery, and a royal vault. Philip II. had it built in the shape of a huge gridiron, in honour of St. Lawrence and in thanksgiving for the victory of St. Quentin. The cost was as enormous as the pomp and royal splendour of the building were magnificent. There, under the dazzling marble dome of the burial vault, proudly called by the Spaniards the Pantheon, Aloysius stood and saw the body of his young companion laid to rest amid the dust of the other noble dead; he saw Philip, that powerful monarch, bowed with grief before the little coffin that deprived him of his brightest and almost

[1] Bolland. 902 B.. [2] Ib. 898 C.

his last hope, for of all his children there now survived only two daughters and the delicate heir to the throne, afterwards Philip III. If anything had been wanting to confirm the young Marquis in his thought of renouncing the world, it must have been more than supplied by this funeral of the Spanish prince. Another advantage he derived from the death of Prince James was the increased leisure now left him for his studies and for the interior life.

A further Divine dispensation was that the writings of the venerable Louis of Granada fell into his hands about this time. He derived from them, in particular, very great zeal for meditative prayer, and now formed the resolution of henceforth devoting a fixed hour to meditation every day. Finding that distractions occasionally beset him, he endeavoured with might and main to obtain the mastery over these weaknesses, and therefore began the meditation afresh every time he had a distraction, however involuntary. By this means he actually succeeded at last in passing a whole hour in prayer without any distraction, though only after having passed three or four hours previously in fighting against them.

In order not to be disturbed at prayer, Aloysius often hid himself in an out-of-the-way place where firewood was stored, so that he was nowhere to be found when friends came to visit him. This brought him many a reprimand from his parents, and his friends probably dropped off by degrees; but nothing could have pleased him better than this. This wood-shed, as well as Aloysius' room, was afterwards turned into a chapel in his honour, when the house passed into the possession of the Society of Jesus and was used by them as a noviciate [1].

---

[1] *Schröder* 49 358.

Aloysius had found a good confessor in the Sicilian Father Ferdinand Paterno. The latter was then at the Jesuit College at Madrid, founded in 1572. Aloysius placed entire confidence in him, and put himself under his direction. Father Paterno tells us in a letter written some years later that Aloysius showed, even at this early age, "a prudence and maturity of judgment and behaviour such as is rarely found even in elderly persons; he was a mortal enemy to idleness, and always occupied himself with something good and useful, in particular with the study of Holy Scripture, which afforded him much consolation. In his conversation, also, he showed great modesty and caution, never saying an uncharitable word about others".

These are certainly virtues rarely found among courtiers, and as little to be expected from one of his age as they were admirable under such circumstances. Who would not have been deceived and carried away in this whirl of mundane pursuits? Aloysius worked and studied, was unmoved by flattery, and rejected all the arts of worldly vanity. The young Marquis, the prince's page, liked to be seen in old, patched garments, and disdained to cast a single glance of pleasure or approval on the world. God was everything to him, He alone absorbed his thoughts and the desires of his heart. In the midst of the tumult of the world he mounted step by step in union with Him. And this at such a tender age, contrary to all natural impulses, and in spite of the urgent persuasions of those around him! What a wise, strong character — a truly royal child, a "steadfast prince" indeed!

10. The Choice of a Vocation.

(Madrid 1583.)

One other memorable event of Aloysius' life was to take place during his stay at Madrid. Here he made his final choice of a vocation.

Taking into account the great earnestness of the holy boy, who was now in his sixteenth year, it is no wonder that the great responsibility of this choice, a matter of such momentous consequence for time and eternity, occupied his thoughts thus early, and that he felt called upon to make his decision. In this respect also the marvellous guidance of God was seen in this child of predestination. He was led on step by step to the clear recognition of God's Will, and was guided by His gentle, fatherly Hand from one stage of the spiritual life to another. In Florence he rose above the level of ordinary Christians by an act of burning love to God; by his vow of chastity, he rendered it impossible for him to carry on the line of his illustrious house. In Mantua he realised, as a consequence of this first step, how natural and how profitable it would be to renounce the Marquisate and become a servant of God and His Church. In Casale he saw what dangers a secular priest might be exposed to, and on the other hand how happily religious live in their monasteries, and how much more easily and securely they work out their salvation. He then definitely decided to enter a religious Order, and made the choice of an Order the subject of much prayer and careful consideration.

The object of the religious life, as established in the Church by Christ (Matt. xix. 21 28 29; Luke ix. 57—62), is to strive after Christian perfection by the observance of the three evangelical counsels — poverty, chastity, and obedience. This general feature is common to all Orders. They differ only in the various means specially chosen by each Order to attain the common goal. Some choose as the chief means the retired life of prayer and penance, or care for their own sanctification, and only influence their fellow-men indirectly; these are the contemplative Orders. Others devote themselves principally to the practice of

charity towards their neighbour, by exercising the corporal works of mercy; these are the purely active Orders. Others, again, endeavour to attain perfection by attending to the spiritual needs of their fellow-men, that is, by exercising the priestly functions; these are the mixed or apostolic Orders. This great variety corresponds and is subservient to the manifold working of the Spirit of God. This Holy Spirit draws within the circle of His action all the peculiarities of character and powers of individuals, and makes them serve the multifarious necessities of the world. He endows and supports the great work of the Church while adorning and giving it endurance by mutually interworking organs. Which of these three principal groups of Orders would be most congenial to Aloysius?

At first he had been peculiarly attracted by the Capuchins, on account of their poverty and humility; and it is easy to understand this, when we remember his great love for those virtues and his desire for an austere life. But he soon gave up all idea of making this choice, because of his weak health; he did not wish to live in an Order where he would have to be constantly granted exemptions from the Rule, and his mother's advice coincided with his views. He next, like St. Ignatius, conceived the idea of entering an Order which had lapsed from the original perfection of its rules, and reforming it — with the grace of God — by his own zeal and good example. But the uncertainty of his success, and the danger the attempt would involve for himself, led him to abandon this project also. The contemplative Orders, which are mainly devoted to the public celebration of the Liturgy and to meditation upon things divine, came next under consideration. These also had a powerful attraction for him, and he thought he would find the practice of these duties easy and profitable. But, on the other hand, it seemed to him that he possessed

talents which fitted him to work directly for the welfare of souls, and thus also for the glory of God; and these would not be turned to account in the contemplative vocation. He had read, too, in the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas[1], that the first rank among the religious Orders is held by those which combine with the contemplative also the active life, and utilize for the spiritual welfare of their neighbour what they have gained by contemplation. This is certainly in perfect imitation of the life led by our Divine Saviour here on earth. And among these mixed Orders, knowing them as he did from personal observation, Aloysius finally fixed his choice upon the Society of Jesus. The following were his reasons: in the first place, the Society was still young, and in the full vigour of its first fervour; secondly, its members are precluded by a special vow from ecclesiastical preferments; thirdly, they devote themselves particularly to the education of the young; fourthly, he was attracted by the success obtained just at this time by the Society in the conversion of the heathen, both in the Indies and in Japan. This was a mode of life and a field of work which was congenial to his most ardent desires, and satisfied all the needs of his soul.

He decided, then, in favour of the Society of Jesus, and found in this decision that peace of soul which is usually a sign that a man has found the right path. But to find out if his resolution was in conformity with the Will of God, which is after all the thing of paramount importance, Aloysius devoted himself to prayer and the reception of the Sacraments. The Feast of Our Lady's Assumption (1583) was approaching, and on that day he prepared himself by special devotions for Holy Communion. During

[1] S. th. 2, 2, q. 188, a. 6.

his thanksgiving he knelt before a miraculous image of Our Lady, and implored her, with ardent entreaties and with all the fervour of his heart, to obtain for him by her intercession the grace to know clearly the Will of God with regard to his vocation. He then received a plain and unmistakable intimation — whether audible or only interior, we do not know — that it was God's Will that he should enter the Society of Jesus. The interior light he received was so clear, that from this moment all his doubts vanished, and he was so firmly convinced of his vocation that he never wavered again[1]. He was also directed by this inspiration to tell his confessor of the decision he had made. Full of joy, he returned home, and went the same day to inform Fr. Paterno of what had happened, and to beg him to use his influence with the Superiors of the Society to obtain his admission. The confessor made him give an exact account of the occurrence, and arrived at the conclusion that this vocation was from God; but he at once told his young penitent that there could be no question of his reception without the consent of the Marquis. The first thing Aloysius must do was to inform his father of the resolve he had taken, and obtain his permission to carry it out.

This, indeed, was to be the last and most difficult task that Aloysius had to perform during his life as a secular.

[1] In the Jesuit Church at Madrid a picture has been placed to commemorate this event. Aloysius is represented kneeling before Our Lady, who holds the Divine Child in her arms. Above her head the Holy Ghost hovers, and she is surrounded by angels. The picture bears the inscription: S. Maria boni consilii, quae in Collegio imperiali Matritensi B. Aloysio voce clara et manifesta suasit, ut Societatem Jesu ingrederetur. (*Manzini* l. 1, c. 7, p. 75; l. 3, c. 4, p. 338.) The miraculous image itself received, on account of this incident, the name of "Our Lady of Good Counsel".

But since he had now recognised the Will of God, he must carry it out; even a rampart of difficulties must not keep us back from God (Ps. xvii. 30).

II. The First Storm.

Aloysius was now 15 years and 6 months old, and he thought it time to enter upon the vocation to which he believed himself called. So, on the very day of his interview with his confessor, he hastened to his mother and confided to her his secret. Donna Martha rejoiced at his resolution, and in her own heart immediately made the sacrifice of her beloved child. It was she, too, who first informed the Marquis of their son's intention. Don Ferdinand's answer was an outburst of anger and displeasure. The Marchioness endeavoured to soothe him, and hoped in spite of it to accustom him gradually to the idea. She constantly tried, by every means in her power, to support her eldest son's project; but this very circumstance aroused the Marquis's suspicion. He attributed this behaviour on her part to partiality for Rudolph, and thought she wished to secure for him the succession to the Marquisate; and this idea embittered him and confirmed him in his opposition. When Aloysius himself came to tell his father of his resolve, he scolded him violently and drove him from his presence, threatening to have him flogged if he persisted in his design. Aloysius modestly answered that he prayed God to grant him the grace to suffer something for His love, and quitted the room.

The Marquis was for several days in a state of terrible agitation, and finally vented his wrath upon his son's confessor, accusing him of having put the idea of becoming a religious into the boy's head. He sent, therefore, for Fr. Paterno, and reproached him passionately with having frustrated all the hopes he had set upon Aloysius, and

having been the cause of all this trouble. The priest quietly replied that he had not known of Aloysius' resolution until a few days before, as the Marquis might convince himself if he would ask his son; but that, although he was not the instigator of it, he was not in the least surprised at Aloysius' wish, and had even expected it, on account of the manner of life he had hitherto led.

This answer calmed Don Ferdinand's anger considerably, and he asked Aloysius why he had not rather chosen an Order in which he would have been free to accept high dignities in the Church; in the Society of Jesus the way to them was barred from the very outset. Aloysius replied that this was one of the very reasons that had induced him to choose the Society; for if he had had any taste for honours and dignities, he could — since God had given him the right of primogeniture — have enjoyed enough of them as Marquis and Prince, and would not have exchanged a certainty for an uncertainty. His father could find no reasonable objection to make to this answer, and so the storm passed over for this time, without having led to any definite result.

Still the Marquis could not convince himself that Aloysius was really in earnest, and had arrived at his decision independently of all exterior influences. He thought some other motive or circumstance must have caused him to take such a resolution. There were other reasons, too, for the irritable and depressed state of Don Ferdinand's mind at this time. His passion for gambling had awakened afresh at the Court of Madrid, and large sums had thus been squandered. It makes a painful impression to read about pecuniary matters connected with this vice of his father in the letters written by St. Aloysius from Madrid [1].

[1] *Fossi*, Lettre di S. L. G. 12 ff.

Aloysius often wept bitter tears over it, and once remarked to his chamberlain that this foolish gambling pained him far more on account of the offence against God than of the pecuniary losses it entailed, and that princes had unhappily only too many occasions of imperilling their eternal salvation [1]. A short time before this, Don Ferdinand had again lost several thousand scudi at play, and on the very evening when his son told him of his resolve, six thousand more. Knowing what Aloysius thought of gambling, and how much it grieved him to see his own father so addicted to this vice, the Marquis hit upon the idea that this resolve of his son's was an adroit move to cure him of his fault.

Indeed, not only Don Ferdinand, but the Court also, on hearing of the young Marquis's intention, attributed it to this cause, and admired his cleverness. But Aloysius repeated his request so often, and assured his father so earnestly that it was solely prompted by his own ardent desire, that the Marquis was at length convinced of the sincerity of his purpose. He was confirmed in this opinion by the Franciscan Fr. Francis, who was a son of Charles Gonzaga, Prince of Bozzoli, and a brother of Scipio, afterwards Cardinal Gonzaga — that is to say, the son of the Marquis's own cousin [2]. This religious had borne in the world the name of Hannibal. He had held a post at the Spanish Court; but after his return from Flanders in 1562 [3], he had entered the Franciscan Order, and was now, as General of the Order (1583), visiting his monasteries in Spain [4].

---

[1] Bolland. 965 F.

[2] Ib. 1004 D. E.; 1025 B.

[3] *Schröder* 376.

[4] Father Francis afterwards became Bishop of Cefalù in Sicily, and finally, at the request of Duke Vincent, Bishop of Mantua.

But Aloysius did not yet gain much by having convinced his father of the sincerity of his resolution; for the Marquis now endeavoured to postpone its execution by promises and evasions, and even hoped by kindness to undermine it altogether. But Aloysius soon noticed this manœuvre, and determined to frustrate it by a bold stroke. Now that Prince James was dead, he was freed from his duties at Court; and one day, having gone with his brother Rudolph and several attendants to visit the Jesuit College, he suddenly informed his companions without any preamble that he would now remain there, and they were to go home and tell the news to his father. The Marquis was suffering from a severe attack of gout, so he sent Dr. Sallust Petrocini, a native of Castiglione and one of the judges of his courts, to the College, with strict injunctions to bring Aloysius home at once. The latter replied that what had to be done might as well take place to-day as to-morrow, and begged his father to let him remain where he was. But it was altogether too much for the Marquis's pride, to be thus forced as it were into acquiescence; he insisted on his son's returning at once, and Aloysius obeyed.

The Marquis now endeavoured to enlist Father Francis Gonzaga as his ally; he represented to him what an inestimable advantage it would be for his subjects to have Aloysius for their ruler, and begged him to persuade the boy to remain in the world and lead a pious and holy life as a secular. But the Franciscan rejected the proposal with great firmness, urging that his duty as a Christian and a religious forbade him to oppose such an evident vocation. Don Ferdinand then begged him at least to persuade Aloysius not to enter until after their return to Italy, which was soon to take place. But the good Father General would not consent to this either, for he remembered that his relatives had made the same request when he

himself had decided, at this very Court of Madrid, to become a religious. He had not complied with their wishes, but had entered at once in Spain. The only thing he would agree to do for the Marquis was to tell Aloysius of his wish, without attempting to influence him in any way. The youth was quite willing to give way to his father on this point, and remarked to the Father General that he plainly foresaw what opposition he would have to encounter in Italy, but that, with the grace of God, he would allow nothing to alter his determination. This satisfied the Marquis for the time being; his great object was to gain time.

But Aloysius also had gained something by the struggle. His father was now convinced that he was in earnest about his vocation, and determined to follow it at all costs; Don Ferdinand himself had held out to him the prospect of his permission to enter later on, and thus Aloysius also had won a victory.

There is scarcely any matter that reveals so plainly men's thoughts and opinions as the question of a religious vocation. God and the world take different sides. Parents certainly have the right and even the duty to test the vocation of their children, but not to hinder it and make it impossible. They, like their children, are subject to the higher authority of the Will of God, and however hard a sacrifice it may exact, neither the one nor the other may resist it. Children are not the exclusive property of their parents, but only charges entrusted to them; and when God requires them, they must be given back. The Marquis was not a bad Christian, but he was a man of the world, anxious for the advancement of his house, and not prepared for such a demand on the part of Almighty God; hence his surprise and resistance. But just as the storm strengthens the young oak, so this opposition only served to reveal the firmness

of his son's character and to confirm and strengthen him in his joyous resolution. "Think ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you no, but separation... They shall be divided: the father against the son, and the son against his father" (Luke xii. 51 53).

12. A Journey beset with Temptations.

(Italy 1584.)

In the spring of 1584 the Marquis began to make preparations for his return to Italy. Admiral Andrew Doria's fleet was just weighing anchor to start for Genoa, and there was no one to whom the Marquis would sooner have entrusted his family. He left only his daughter Isabella at Madrid, as maid-of-honour to the Princess Clara Eugenie. To the great joy of Aloysius, Father Francis also joined the Marquis's party, as he had completed his visitation and was returning to Rome. In Saragossa the Marquis was the guest of the noble family of Don Diego de Espez y Mendoza. The prayers of Aloysius are said to have saved the life of the wife of his host, who gave birth to a child during his stay. This answer to his prayer is still held in remembrance in the chapel of the palace, although this chapel has long since passed into other hands.

The voyage to Genoa, along the coast of the Mediterranean, where all was bright with the bloom of the early summer, was the best that Aloysius could have wished. In the Gulf of Lyons, however, the fleet was in danger of being attacked by Algerian cruisers. They actually followed Doria till his ships were quite close to Genoa[1]. It was on this occasion that Aloysius remarked that it would be grand if they were all martyred for the faith. Whilst on this voyage he one day found a little stone with red spots

[1] *Schröder* 355.

among the rocks of the sea-shore; this brought vividly before him the Passion of Our Lord, and incited him anew to follow the Crucified. He brought it to show to his mother, and said: "See, Signora, what God has let me find, and yet my father will not suffer me to become a religious!" He kept the pebble devoutly for a long time. The voyage, with all its varied incidents, could not disturb his recollection. He propounded to good Father Francis, who accompanied them, the difficulties he had found in Holy Scripture, and held spiritual conversations with him to his heart's content. Aloysius regarded Fr. Francis as a very model of virtue and holiness, and on this account attentively observed all his actions, in which he could not discover the least imperfection.

On the 28th of July the Marquis and his family landed at Genoa, and as soon as they reached Castiglione, Aloysius expected his father to allow him at once to carry out his project. But Don Ferdinand insisted that Aloysius and his younger brother Rudolph should first visit in his name their relatives at the neighbouring Courts. He hoped by this distraction, and through the acquaintances Aloysius would thus make among the élite of the Italian nobility, to put out of his mind the thought of becoming a religious. Aloysius saw through the plan very plainly, but again submitted to his father's wishes, and set off on the journey with a chosen suite of attendants. Their baggage included some magnificent suits of clothes embroidered in gold, but Aloysius could not be persuaded to wear them; he was dressed as usual in a plain suit of black serge, worn and shabby. But he left Rudolph quite free to make use of his elegant attire, which his brother accordingly did, so that the attendants remarked: "Those are the fine clothes in which Aloysius would not appear." [1]

[1] Bolland. 950 E.

They visited in turn the Courts of Mantua, Ferrara, Parma, and Turin. In the artistically-built city of Ferrara, dull and lifeless in spite of many splendid palaces, that lover of art and patron of Tasso, Duke Alphonsus II. of Este, held splendid Court in the castle-fortress with his wife Margaret, one of the Gonzagas of Mantua. In antique Parma ruled Ranuccio II., the son of Alexander Farnese, the famous General of Philip II. and Governor of the Netherlands. He received Aloysius with every mark of honour. In Pavia the Saint became acquainted with Frederick Borromeo, the youthful nephew of St. Charles Borromeo. This young man was destined to succeed his uncle in the See of Milan, and also to do much to promote the beatification of Aloysius. He lived to see him raised to the altars of the Church. The Duke of Savoy and Piedmont, Charles Emanuel, son of Philibert, the victor at St. Quentin, was visited by Aloysius in Turin. Philibert had chosen this city as the capital of his duchy. Another near relative whom Aloysius visited while there was Jerome della Rovere, Archbishop and afterwards Cardinal, a cousin of his grandmother. He also paid a short visit to his uncle Hercules Tana at Chieri not far from Turin.

This tour to one after another of the pomp-loving Courts of Northern Italy might have been a really dangerous temptation for one less proof against such trials than Aloysius. Happily he knew how to arm himself against the allurements of the world, by keeping his mind fixed upon heaven. On the journey he prayed and meditated just as he was accustomed to do at home, and never omitted any of his usual devotions and mortifications. As soon as he arrived at an inn, he looked about for a crucifix. If he did not find one, he drew a cross on paper with charcoal, and with this before him spent an hour or more in meditation. If there was a house of the Jesuits in the city where he

happened to be staying, as soon as he had presented himself to the Princes he lost no time in paying it a visit. No sooner did he enter their College than he turned his steps to the chapel where the Blessed Sacrament was reserved, and afterwards conversed with his future brethren about God and spiritual things.

An eye-witness describes in the following words one of these visits, paid by the Saint to the Noviciate in Novellara not far from Parma, founded in 1564: "I was a novice in the Novellara house of the Society of Jesus when Aloysius with his brother Rudolph and their suite arrived in that town. He was received with high honours by the Princes of the place, who also belonged to the Gonzaga family. I noticed that Rudolph, who was taller and much more richly dressed than Aloysius, always gave place to his brother and walked after him. A great crowd of people had assembled to see Aloysius, not only because he was the eldest son and heir of the Marquis, but because his sanctity was spoken of everywhere, and it was rumoured that he intended to become a religious. We novices stood in rows in the court-yard as Aloysius and his suite entered. The modesty and holiness of his bearing filled me with such a feeling of reverence that I scarcely dared to look at him. It was a great consolation to us all, and helped to strengthen us in our vocation, to know that the young Marquis wished to enter our Order, though he could find no way to do so."[1] Aloysius never attempted to conceal his principles. He spoke out as plainly among those of his own rank as when with his future companions. Whilst staying at the palace of the Archbishop of Turin, he one day found himself in the company of several other young nobles and an old gentleman of seventy years of age. The latter made some rather indelicate jokes, where-

[1] Bolland. 950 C.

upon Aloysius turned to him indignantly and said: "Are you not ashamed, at your age and in your position, to address such conversation to young gentlemen? Do you not know that evil communications corrupt good manners?" With this he took up a spiritual book and quitted the room. In Chieri his uncle, Don Hercules Tana, gave a banquet in his honour, to which a numerous and distinguished company was invited. Aloysius at first declined to appear at table. But as it was represented to him that the feast had been prepared in his honour and his absence would give offence, he promised to come on condition that he should not be asked to dance. The condition was accepted, and Aloysius entered the room, where a great number of noble ladies and gentlemen were assembled. But scarcely had he sat down when a lady came up and asked him to dance with her. Aloysius rose in displeasure, and quitted the room without a word. His uncle went in search of him, and after considerable time found him in one of the servants' rooms, kneeling between the bed and the wall. Don Hercules did not dare to disturb him, but went away full of reverence and respect.

The world did not succeed in winning Aloysius' heart. On the contrary, it afforded him opportunities of proving his holiness and teaching those who could not make up their minds to imitate it, at least to treat it with respect. Thus God overrules everything in the lives of His Saints not only for their own good, but for the spiritual well-being of others. Aloysius became truly a spectacle not only to God and to the angels, but also to men (1. Cor. 4, 9).

13. Fresh Combats and a Victory.

(Castiglione 1584.)

Aloysius had now returned from his tour to the Courts. He was now seventeen years of age, and expected that

his father would soon let him go. But the Marquis would not hear of it. He still thought it doubtful whether Aloysius was really in earnest in his determination, or was merely following an impulse of youthful, ill-considered fervour. So he tried new means of persuasion. It was probably at his instigation that Duke William of Mantua sent a bishop to Castiglione to persuade Aloysius at least to content himself with becoming a secular priest, if he would not remain a layman. He would thus be able to retain a private income and to accept high ecclesiastical dignities, which would enable him to do far more good to his neighbour than he could do as a religious. St. Charles Borromeo and others had certainly done more good than many religious, said the Duke, and he himself would promise to help Aloysius as much as possible in this respect. The Saint begged the bishop to thank the Duke for his good intentions and the kindness he had always shown him, but assured him that he must decline the offer of such favours, for he wished to have no treasure but God alone, and had chosen the Society of Jesus precisely because it forbade the acceptance of Church dignities.

This attempt was soon followed by a second, also on the part of two of Aloysius' relatives. The first of these was Alfonso, Prince of Castel Goffredo, whose dominions the Saint would inherit. He received the same reply as the Duke of Mantua. The other was probably Cardinal Vincent Gonzaga (1540—1591), of the Guastalla-Molfetta family; he wished Aloysius to give up the idea of entering the Society of Jesus, and proposed that he should join the Carthusians or Capuchins, who do not live in the world like the Jesuits. Probably the proposal was really made because in these two Orders ecclesiastical preferments are not expressly excluded, or perhaps even because his relatives hoped in this way to persuade Aloysius to give

up the idea of the religious life altogether, since his health was not robust enough to stand the austerity of these Orders. But he replied that in the Society he would be far enough from the world, since riches and honours were there equally impossible.

The third attempt was made by two other priests, at the request of the Marquis. The Archpriest of Castiglione, John Pastorio, had great influence over Aloysius; but when he tried to fight the Marquis's battle with him, the Saint defended his point of vantage so well that his assailant became henceforward his most zealous advocate with his father. Another priest, Fr. Francis Panigarolo, who was himself a religious, a popular and eloquent preacher, and afterwards Bishop of Asti, was equally unsuccessful; but perhaps this was partly due to the circumstance that he tried the experiment more to please the Marquis than from conviction, and did not put his heart into the matter. He afterwards said to a Cardinal: "I was to play the Devil's Advocate with Aloysius, and I did it too; but he stood firm."

After all these fruitless efforts, the Marquis himself determined to strike a decisive blow. Being again confined to bed with gout, he sent for Aloysius, and asked what he now thought about his vocation. Aloysius replied modestly but firmly that he had not changed his mind, but was resolved to enter the Society of Jesus. At this reply, his father could not control his anger; he overwhelmed him with reproaches and threats, and finally bade him begone. Aloysius took this for a command to leave the Castle altogether, and requested his valet to collect his books, his bed, and the few other things he had in his room, and bring them to the Franciscan monastery of St. Mary's. This monastery stood close to a little artificial lake not far from Castiglione, and in the vicinity was a

beautiful villa belonging to the Marquis. Ancient subterranean vaults, mosaics, and conduits by which the medicinal water is brought to a magnificent fountain in front of the Castle, seem to indicate that baths were formerly built on the site. Here Aloysius took up his abode, and passed his time in prayer either in the Franciscan Church or in his room, disciplining himself several times a day [1]. The Marquis was so angry that no one dared to tell him of his son's departure. After a few days, however, he inquired where Aloysius was, and on being told, angrily sent for him at once. When the Saint appeared, he reproached him bitterly for despising his commands and irritating him in this way. Aloysius calmly and modestly replied that he thought he was obeying his father's wishes in what he had done. After another angry outburst, the Marquis ordered him to retire to his room. Aloysius obeyed, and immediately betook himself to prayer, beseeching God with many tears not to forsake him in his distress, but to grant him strength and perseverance to do His will. He then disciplined himself till the blood flowed. In the meantime the Marquis's anger had somewhat cooled. Remorse, love for his eldest son and fear of having grieved him and driven him to desperation, began to make him see things in a more reasonable light. He called the Governor of the Castle, who was in the antechamber, and bade him go and see what Aloysius was doing. The Governor went to Aloysius' room, and finding the door

---

[1] The room used by Aloysius is still preserved, and also a part of the old building. It is the property of a community of nuns in Castiglione, who are called "Virgins of Jesus", and of whom we shall have occasion to speak later on. Cf. *Chiarenza*, Una giornata in Castiglione 33, and also p. 288 of the present work.

locked, widened with his dagger a crevice in it, so that he could see the holy youth kneeling on the floor, praying, weeping, and scourging himself so severely that his back was covered with blood. This touched the Governor so much that he returned to the Marquis with tears in his eyes, and told him that, if he knew what Aloysius was doing, he certainly would not prevent him from carrying out his resolve. The Marquis, astonished, asked what he had seen. The Governor told him all, and assured him that no one could look on at such a scene without weeping. Don Ferdinand was startled, but said no more. On the following day, at the same hour, he was told that Aloysius was again ill-treating himself in the same manner. He immediately had himself carried in an arm-chair to the antechamber of his son's room, and there saw for himself through the crevice how Aloysius wept, prayed, and disciplined himself. The Marquis at first seemed petrified by the sight; but soon recovering himself, he bade the servants knock at the door, and then entered the room with the Marchioness. He found the place where Aloysius had been kneeling quite wet with tears, and stained with spots of blood. This sight at last overcame the father's obduracy, and as Aloysius repeated his request every day, he finally gave him permission to follow his vocation. Don Ferdinand himself wrote to Rome, to Scipio Gonzaga, the brother of Fr. Francis, who was then Patriarch of Jerusalem and afterwards Cardinal, asking him to recommend his son — "his dearest possession in this world" — to Fr. Claud Acquaviva, the General of the Society of Jesus, and ask him where Aloysius should make his noviciate. The Father General replied that it would be best for him to come to Rome for this purpose, and not to Novellara. Aloysius was almost beside himself with joy. He wrote himself to the General, thanking him with heartfelt gratitude

for his acceptance, and placing himself entirely at his disposal. The letter was as follows:

"Most Reverend Father in Christ,

Your Reverence can scarcely believe what great consolation God has vouchsafed to grant me during these last few days. I have always put my trust in the infinite mercy of His Divine Majesty, and hoped that He would let this hard and painful struggle turn out for the best, and for the salvation of my soul. And as I do not doubt that Your Reverence will accord me the final comfort, I can say with assurance: 'Facta est tranquillitas magna' (There is a great calm); and, when I take leave of my father's house: 'Domus mea hodie salva facta est' (To-day is salvation come to my house). I beg Your Reverence to let me soon have directions about my journey 'ad sanctam civitatem' (to the Holy City), where the Vicar of our Lord Jesus Christ is enthroned, in order that I may there enjoy the intercourse of so many holy persons, derive profit from their holy admonitions, amend my life and, with the help of God and in imitation of their holy example, put on the 'novum hominem' (new man). My father will give you all necessary information. In token of my obedience to you from henceforth, I kiss Your Paternity's hands, and remain

Your obedient son in Christ
Aloysius Gonzaga.

Castiglione, Feast of Our Lady's Assumption, Aug. 15th 1585." [1]

In his reply, Fr. Acquaviva called Aloysius his son, and told him that he was willing to receive him, and was

[1] *Fozzi*, Lettere di S. L. G. 17 f.

awaiting his arrival in Rome [1]. Exactly two years had elapsed between the day when Aloysius had first clearly recognised his vocation and the date of his letter to the Father General.

It was now time to think of the formal abdication of the temporal sovereignty which the future religious had to make. He expressed his willingness to consent to whatever conditions his father thought advisable. So the Marquis decided that, in the first place, Aloysius should renounce all his rights to the Marquisate of Castiglione in favour of his younger brother Rudolph; secondly, he should also renounce his rights to any fiefs that might fall to him during his life-time by inheritance or by bequest; thirdly, he should receive for his portion a sum of 4000 ducats on account and a yearly payment of 400 ducats. Aloysius, as we have already said, was ready to accept anything, so the document was accordingly drawn up, examined by lawyers and by the Senate of Milan, and finally — since the fiefs in question were all Imperial grants — sent to the Emperor for his ratification. Aloysius himself begged the Duchess of Mantua, who was a daughter of Ferdinand I. and the aunt of the Emperor Rudolph, to use her influence with the Emperor, who had settled the fiefs on the eldest son, in order to obtain from him a favourable answer. She was very kind to Aloysius, and promised to do what she could.

So far, then, the question of Aloysius' vocation was settled. It had been a hard battle; but, by the grace of God, he had gained the victory. Step by step he had to win his way by might and main; it cost him tears and even blood

[1] Fr. Acquaviva, a son of the Duke of Atri, was a distant relative of Aloysius, and belonged to the line of the Gonzaga-Sabionetta-Bozzolis. *Rittershusii*, Duces Mantuae, tab. A.

before he stood at the gate that led to freedom. How differently vocations develop with different men! Some seem to come into the world with a vocation cut out and ready-made, and go on to their goal free from doubt and unassailed; others do not find out their real vocation until late, and only after many wanderings sail into port in the evening of life. To some God shows their destiny in life quite plainly; others must seek it like a hidden treasure. Some find themselves drawn into their vocation without their own doing and almost against their will, like swallows that have flown into the sanctuary by mistake; others see theirs flee from them, as it were, and they can only capture it after hard and painful sacrifices. Aloysius belongs to the last category. He really took serious trouble about his vocation, and strove manfully against his adversaries. Unhappily, relatives, one's own flesh and blood, are often the first to oppose a vocation, and the more natural the bond, the more it costs to break it; the dearer the enemy, the more painful is the victory. We are willing enough to part from our dear ones when it is a question of their worldly advantage; but if they wish to consecrate themselves to God, they are regarded as lost to us, and the battle begins. Flesh and blood seeks itself alone, not God or the true good of those whom it professes to love. Thus is verified the prophecy of our Saviour: "A man's enemies shall be they of his own household" (Matt. x. 36).

14. A Truce, but not a Peace.

(Milan 1584—1585.)

Whilst the question of Aloysius' abdication was awaiting Emperor Rudolph II.'s decision in Prague, important business rendered the Marquis's presence at Milan imperative. But as he was still confined to bed with gout, he entrusted

the management of these affairs to Aloysius, and sent him to Milan, where the Saint's fatherly friend, the great Cardinal Charles Borromeo, had succumbed a few months before to his apostolic labours and austerities.

Aloysius naturally occupied himself chiefly with his father's business, and succeeded during his stay of seven or eight months (1584—1585) in settling everything to Don Ferrante's satisfaction. In spite or rather on account of his recollection and the interior life he led, he had an extraordinary talent for managing people and business, and this was precisely what made his father feel his departure so much.

Aloysius contrived to turn his stay in Milan to good account for his studies also. The Society of Jesus had a famous College there, the Brera, which had formerly beonged to the Order of the Humiliati, but had been handed lover to the Society through the mediation of St. Charles Borromeo in the year 1564, after the dissolution of this Order by Pius IV. Here Aloysius continued his course of philosophy, and particularly natural science. He attended the lectures morning and evening; or, if business prevented him, he had notes taken of them, so that he could study them afterwards. He did not content himself with being a dumb listener and an honorary member of the class, but joined in the disputations and debates in his turn, with such skill, amiability and humility that everyone became attached to him. He also attended the mathematical lectures, and displayed such attention and intelligence that he was able to dictate them all to his servant when he reached home, without a mistake in the figures or calculations. He nearly always walked to the College and back, although he had horses enough at his disposal, and rarely exchanged a word with his attendants on the way. He was always dressed in a simple black suit of Florentine serge, and never wore

a sword. He showed the greatest respect when in conversation with priests, or even with laymen of high position.

Aloysius' only recreation, while in Milan, consisted in conversing with the religious of the College upon spiritual matters or science. He spent all his free time there, and did not confine his intercourse to the Fathers alone, but liked to seek the company of the lay brothers. He very often talked with the porter of the College, and was as delighted as a child when the latter, as sometimes happened, entrusted him with the keys while he delivered messages in the house; for it seemed to him then as though he belonged to the Society already. The professors and scholastics of the Brera were accustomed to spend Thursdays at La Ghisolfa, a villa outside the city, not far from the Porta Comasina. Aloysius would go out on these days, book in hand, and walk along the road until he saw some of the Fathers and students coming. He then greeted them respectfully and followed them at a distance to the villa. He took pleasure even in looking at them, and envied them the happiness of being able to follow the impulse of their hearts and live entirely for God's service.

During the Carnival and at other times when the city was full of sightseers he took up his abode entirely at the College, in order that he might not be disturbed by the gay doings. He only once took part in them, and that after his own fashion. There was a great tournamen in Milan, and this was a welcome opportunity for the young nobility to display their wealth and prowess. The streets were crowded with horsemen, each trying to surpass the others in the splendour of their arms and apparel, and the trappings of their horses. This age was particularly distinguished by its magnificence in these respects, and the Italians ranked next to the Spaniards in their horsemanship. The riding schools attracted as many young

French and German nobles to Italy as the Universities. Fabulous sums were spent in Rome, Florence and elsewhere on racing and the breeding of race-horses. The Dukes of Mantua, especially, had for this purpose dealings with Spain, Ireland, Africa, and even with the Sultan [1]. Aloysius might have distinguished himself on this occasion. But what did he do? Instead of allowing his servant, as usual, to lead behind him a horse richly caparisoned with gold-embroidered and silken trappings, he rode a mule through the streets, attended by only two servants. The world laughed at him, but Aloysius in his turn laughed at the world; and many religious who met him were greatly edified and pleased at the sight of such humility.

As regards his spiritual life, Aloysius kept to all his accustomed devotions; but of course he also made good use of all the opportunities that his stay in Milan offered for his advancement in piety. He often visited the miraculous Madonna di San Celso, which was resorted to by crowds of pilgrims at that time on account of the many wonderful answers to prayer obtained there. On Sundays and feasts he received the Sacraments in the Church of St. Fidelis, built by St. Charles Borromeo for the Society of Jesus in 1569. Fr. Charles Reggio, who used to preach there at that time, afterwards related that whenever he wished to rouse himself to fervour and enthusiasm in his sermons, he had only to cast a glance at Aloysius, who usually occupied a place in front of the pulpit.

Whilst Aloysius was in Milan, the ratification of his abdication had arrived from the Emperor. The Marquis came

---

[1] *Burckhardt,* Kultur der Renaissance in Italien 290. *Hübner,* Sixtus V. II 136. — Duke Frederick's favourite horses have been immortalized by a painting in the Palace of Del Te in Mantua. Cf. *Reumont,* Geschichte der Stadt Rom III b 466.

quite unexpectedly one day to have another hard battle with his son on the subject. He still entertained the hope that time and circumstances would cause the Saint to change his mind. So he asked him what he now thought about his former project. Aloysius replied that he was of the same mind as before. At first the Marquis again broke out into reproaches and complaints; but soon recovering himself, he began to talk quietly to his son, representing to him that he, his father, was certainly not a bad Christian, and did not wish to resist the Will of God; but that this plan was evidently not His Will, but the rash enthusiasm of youth. God, he urged, could not contradict Himself, nor inspire anyone to do what was contrary to filial duty and the interests of His own honour. Aloysius' character was surely strong enough to withstand the dangers of the world and of riches, and to lead in the world a life in keeping with the principles and spirit of a religious; and he would be treading the path to heaven while guiding his subjects thither by word and example. He begged him not to forget how his subjects loved and esteemed him, desiring nothing more ardently than to have him for their ruler; and also what influence he already had with other princes. The Marquis further pointed out that Rudolph was unfitted by his youth and his passionate character to take over the government, and might bring trouble upon the whole family. He added with emotion that Aloysius might at least have compassion on him, his father, so broken-down by illness and so sorely in need of help, which no one else could give him; and finally, bursting into a flood of tears, he declared that Aloysius' entrance into religion would bring him to his grave. The Saint was deeply touched by his father's words, and thanked him for all his love and solicitude; but assured him that he had reflected long and carefully upon all this. If he

were not convinced that God was calling him from the world to the religious life, he would desire nothing more earnestly than to please his father, to whom, under God, he owed everything; but since he felt assured that it was really God's Will which demanded this sacrifice, he had confidence that He would dispose things for the best and would take care of his family. All this and more might be expected from His Divine Goodness.

The Marquis at last realized that this was indeed Aloysius' conviction, and that it alone was the cause of his resistance to his father's wishes. But he did not yet give up all hope; he had recourse to several other persons, laymen and also religious, begging them to try to persuade his son that it would be more to the glory of God for him to undertake the government of his States. In point of fact, several of them more than once employed all their eloquence for this purpose, even trying to inspire Aloysius with a fear of the sacrifices and privations of the religious life. But all their efforts were fruitless. They all declared to the Marquis that it was really a divine vocation, and were full of admiration and praise of the Saint.

After this unanimous verdict, Don Ferdinand determined to obtain a final decision. He had himself carried in a sedan-chair to the Jesuit College, to see Fr. Achilles Gagliardi, who had a great repute in the city. He told this Father that he would leave the question of Aloysius' vocation to his decision, and do whatever he should recommend, only stipulating that he should first do all he could to persuade his son to change his mind, and urge all possible reasons against his vocation. The Father accepted the condition, sent for Aloysius, and examined him for an hour in the presence of the Marquis, in order to discover whether he was really following a divine inspiration. Since

Aloysius had chosen the Society of Jesus, the Father put before him every imaginable difficulty that he could meet with in that Order, and pressed him with so many objections that the Saint, as he afterwards related, really hesitated for a moment, and thought the Father was serious and meant what he said. No one had pushed him to such an extremity before. However, he replied so clearly and concisely to all Fr. Gagliardi's objections, answering them partly by argument and partly by quotations from Holy Scripture and the theologians of the Church, that the Father soon found out how well he had studied St. Thomas. At last Fr. Gagliardi declared that Aloysius was in the right, and professed himself quite satisfied, saying that he ought to be permitted to obey God's Will in this matter. Aloysius breathed freely again, and left the Father alone with the Marquis, who now admitted that he was convinced. He then began to relate how Aloysius had lived from his earliest childhood, and promised to give him permission to join the Society. A few days after, Don Ferdinand returned to Castiglione, leaving Aloysius to follow within a short time.

Thus his sojourn in Milan, which had been so peaceful, ended with another hard struggle. Was it to be the last? Whatever might happen, Aloysius was clear in his own mind about his vocation, and determined to follow God's call at any cost. It is of the greatest importance to bring a clear understanding and a decided will to bear upon such matters. When one has once recognized the goal, one must not shrink from any sacrifice nor show any hesitation; then the victory is assured. "I have said I would keep thy law" (Ps. cxviii. 57). "I have sworn and am determined to keep the judgments of thy justice" (Ps. cvxiii. 106).

15. The Last Contest.

(Mantua and Castiglione, 1585.)

Aloysius had now obtained another promise from his father; but who can wonder if, after the experiences he had already gone through, he did not put much faith in it, but sought to arm himself for fresh struggles and strengthen himself in his resolution? He first of all wrote to the General of the Society, telling him how matters now stood, and asking him to advise him what to do if his father made new difficulties. He asked, too, whether he might not, in this case, take his departure without his father's leave, since it was so evident that his vocation came from God[1]. The General pitied him greatly, but replied that it would be more to the glory of God and the good of the Society for him to try to obtain his father's permission. Aloysius took this advice, and set out for Mantua, where Duke William and his pious wife Eleonora had built a Jesuit College in the preceding year (1584), in accordance with the last will and testament of Cardinal Hercules Gonzaga.

Aloysius arrived in Mantua in July 1585, and found the city in a flutter of excitement and gaiety. The Ambassadors sent to Rome by way of Lisbon and Madrid by the converted Japanese kings, under conduct of some Jesuit fathers, to do homage to the Holy Father in the name of the new Christians of Japan, were daily expected to arrive. The embassy, after remaining in Rome till after the death of Gregory XIII. and the election of his successor Sixtus V., returned by Loretto and Mantua, and were received with princely honours on their arrival in the latter city, by Duke William and his son Don Vincent. Probably the festivities

[1] Unfortunately this letter has not been preserved.

were enhanced by the wedding of the young Duke Vincent with Eleonora, the daughter of the Duke of Tuscany, with whom Aloysius had once been in almost daily intercourse while in Florence [1]. Everyone, including Don Ferdinand and Rudolph, hastened thither to see the wonderful embassy and to be present at the festivities that took place on this occasion [2].

Aloysius was nowhere to be seen as long as the rejoicings lasted. In spite of the heat, for it was in the middle of the summer, he was making a retreat in the Jesuit College under the guidance of Fr. Anthony Valentino, in order to arm himself for new struggles. He followed the Exercises of St. Ignatius for a period of between two and three weeks, praying continually and practising every virtue, so that he greatly edified those around him by his piety, humility, and great austerity. The lay brother who waited on him could not understand how anyone could live on so little nourishment. Aloysius made a general confession of his whole life, and then the Rules of the Society were given him to look over. What he read in them pleased him so much that he said none of the sacrifices that the Order demands could alarm him. Before leaving he asked for a copy of the meditations on the Passion, for he thought he had special need of them just then.

Aloysius came back to Castiglione, and would have liked to renew his request to his father at once; but fearing to anger him, he waited for some time. In the meantime he gave the most edifying example to all who saw him. When he went outside the Castle, he was so polite and attentive to all whom he met that he nearly always had his hat in his hand. He never used a cushion in

---

[1] Bolland. 929 E. *Rittershusii* Duces Mantuae, tab. A.

[2] Bolland. 958 B.

church, like the other members of the family; but would kneel for hours together, rapt in meditation or reciting vocal prayers.

On Sundays, when he went to Holy Communion, his thanksgiving lasted so long that Rudolph used to go out for a walk and then call for Aloysius on his way home. He never missed hearing Vespers, and never sat down during the service. He kept such a close watch upon his tongue that sometimes whole days would elapse without his speaking a word. He increased his bodily penances still further, and became in consequence so weak and ailing that he could scarcely stand. Indeed, this was one of the very reasons that the Marchioness urged upon her husband in order to induce him to grant Aloysius' wish, saying: "What is the use of keeping Aloysius here? We shall only lose him in a short time, for he will certainly die if he continues to practise such mortifications. But if we let him go, his superiors in religion will soon put a stop to his excesses in this respect, and thus prolong his life." At this time Aloysius devoted himself to his younger brothers and sisters with the tenderest fraternal affection, teaching them their catechism and prayers; and in order to make them docile to his instructions, he always kept a supply of sugarplums and toys[1]. He was especially fond of his brother Francis, whether because he found him intelligent and of virtuous disposition, or because he knew by supernatural insight what a support he would become to the family. One day Aloysius was sitting with his mother, when Francis, who was playing with some of the pages, began to cry loudly. His mother thought he was being hurt, and would have hastened to the rescue; but Aloysius interposed, telling her not to fear, for Francis knew how

[1] Bolland. 958 C.

to take care of himself, and would be the mainstay of the family [1].

At last Aloysius thought he had waited long enough, and as the Marquis still gave no sign of letting him go, he took what seemed to him a good opportunity, and reminded his father of the promise he had made. Don Ferdinand replied that he did not remember ever having given any such permission, and that he never would give it until Aloysius had reflected carefully upon the subject and had recovered his health sufficiently to enable him to bear the burdens of the religious life; which could scarcely be possible before he had attained his twenty-fifth year. However, the Marquis added, Aloysius could go if he pleased, but upon his own responsibility; for he, his father, would then no longer regard him as his son. Aloysius was dumbfounded at so unkind an answer, and began to entreat his father to let him go; but in vain. The Marquis absolutely refused. What was now to be done? Aloysius could not write to the Father General again. At last, after long and earnest prayer, he decided upon the following compromise. He would wait one or two years longer before entering religion, but on two conditions: first, that he might during that period pursue his studies in Rome; and secondly, that his father should write immediately to the General of the Society, promising to let him go at the end of that time. Upon these conditions, Aloysius said, he would obey his father and wait; but if the Marquis would not accept them, he could not delay any longer,

[1] Later on it was seen how true this prophecy was. After the murder of Rudolph, which took place on the 3rd of January 1593, Francis succeeded him in the government, and restored the former prestige of his house. The tutor Del Turco also relates that Aloysius, even as a child, frequently made predictions to his attendants that were subsequently fulfilled to the letter.

for that would be offending God to please his father. And if the Society would not then receive him, he would prefer to be a homeless wanderer through the world, rather than go against his conscience.

The Marquis was very unwilling to consent to these conditions; but fearing to drive his son to extremities, he at last agreed to them. Aloysius wrote at once to the Father General, telling him how matters now stood, and what agreement he had made with his father. He wrote that every fresh delay pained him deeply; he regarded his vocation to the Society as the greatest grace God had ever granted him, and would die a hundred times, rather than renounce it [1].

In accordance with this promise, Don Ferdinand was now obliged to allow his son to go to Rome, and the next thing to settle was, where he should reside. The Marquis thought it most befitting the position of his family that Aloysius should live in the house of Cardinal Vincent Gonzaga, and requested Duke William to use his influence to obtain this favour. The Duke acquiesced; but they could not agree as to which of them should first write to the Cardinal, so fortunately for Aloysius the plan came to nothing. Had it succeeded, he would almost certainly have become a dependant of the Cardinal, and have been prevented from following his vocation for some years at least. The Marquis then conceived the idea of allowing Aloysius to live in the Roman Seminary, then under the direction of the Jesuits, but he was to have his own special apartments and attendance. Scipio Gonzaga, Patriarch of Jerusalem, undertook to negotiate the matter with the Father General; but he met with a refusal, as it would not have been compatible with the regular discipline of a

[1] Bolland. 656 E. Only a part of this letter has been preserved.

religious house. Don Ferdinand, nevertheless, wished Aloysius to try to obtain the desired permission through the mediation of Eleonora, Duchess of Mantua, who was a great benefactress of the Society. But Aloysius urged that it would be most unbecoming for him to make such a request to the Duchess, since he had previously asked her to use her influence with the Emperor to obtain his consent to the abdication of the Marquisate; to do so would seem as though he repented of the step. So this plan also failed.

In the meantime Aloysius had redoubled his prayers and penances, in order that he might at length succeed in obtaining from God his liberation. One day, after he had spent four or five hours in prayer, he suddenly felt impelled to make another attempt to gain the consent of his father. He regarded this as an inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and obeyed it at once. The Marquis was again confined to his bed with gout. Aloysius entered his room, and said in a respectful but firm tone: "I am in your power, father, and you can do with me what you please. But know this, that God calls me to the Society of Jesus, and you are resisting His Will by opposing my vocation." Having uttered these words, he immediately quitted the room again. But these few words and the solemn and earnest manner of Aloysius had deeply impressed the Marquis, and on reflection he could not help owning to himself that he really had resisted far too long, and had also instigated others to oppose his son. He had to admit, too, in his inmost heart, that his resistance had not been actuated by the purest and most disinterested motives. Fear and remorse filled his soul, and yet, on the other hand, it pierced him to the very heart to think of losing such a son. Overcome by pain and anguish, the strong man turned his face to the wall and burst into tears. The

whole family witnessed his grief, but without knowing the cause. After a while Don Ferdinand sent for Aloysius, and said to him: "My son, what a cruel wound you have inflicted on my heart! I have always loved and still love you, because you deserve my love, and I had set all my hopes upon you. And now you tell me that God calls you elsewhere. I will not keep you back any longer; go where you will, and may God grant you happiness!" Having said this, he again burst into a flood of tears, and could not be consoled. Aloysius thanked the Marquis briefly but affectionately, and then left him, lest his presence should increase his pain. Going to his room, the Saint cast himself on his knees, thanked God again and again for having inspired him with this happy thought and blessed it with success, and offered himself entirely to His Will.

This was the last battle; Aloysius had conquered at last. It was a complete and glorious victory, fought by the Spirit of God and with the untarnished weapons of prayer and patience, fortitude and joyous self-sacrifice. It was in this last struggle especially that Aloysius displayed that powerful incentive that guides and inspires, fortifies and preserves every true vocation — the thought of God's Will, the clear conviction that it is God Who is calling, and that His Will must be done at any cost. God's Will with regard to the individual, as it is shown in every true and heaven-inspired vocation — on this all depends and by this must our decision be governed; not by position, not by office or the prospect of a brilliant career in Church or State, for the corporal or spiritual welfare of our neighbour; but solely God's holy, clearly recognized Will. If a man does God's Will, he does enough, for he does what stands above all else. Whatever he does in addition is too much, and nothing but brilliant disorder can proceed from such activity. Aloysius invoked the Will of God

with earnestness and determination; this at last overcame the resistance of the Marquis, as it does to the present day in all pious and God-fearing hearts. "God will it." All other considerations are then silenced, all hesitation disappears, and no sacrifice is too hard.

But our poor human hearts! As a rule, the sacrifice that parents have to make in such cases is harder than that of their children. The latter are generally borne over the first difficulties by joy and grace; they are going to *their* country, *their* home; but the parents, on the contrary, feel only the loss, the separation and loneliness, the destruction of their plans for the future. . . . What an instructive example of this the Marquis gives us! He takes his stand, does all he can to prevent his son from following his vocation, pressing into his service kindness and unkindness, clerics and seculars, favour and menace, pain and flattery, — all must resist the call of God. The sacrifice is too hard. Don Ferdinand certainly had reasons, naturally speaking, even weighty reasons, for his resistance. Aloysius was his firstborn, a child specially blessed by God, and the hope of the family. But faith, conscience and the fear of God finally conquered the father's heart, and he made the sacrifice of his Aloysius. He did not lose his reward. God recompensed him in ways that human conjecture could never have foreseen; for He does not let himself be surpassed in generosity.

16. The Renunciation.

(Mantua 1585.)

Aloysius now wished to follow his vocation as soon as possible. But Donna Martha had just gone to Turin to visit the Princess Catherine, youngest daughter of Philip II., whom Duke Charles Emanuel of Savoy had married and brought home to Turin on the 10th of August in this year,

amid great rejoicing. Aloysius was obliged to wait at least until her return. There were besides numerous relatives who were more or less concerned with his abdication, and whose consent had to be obtained; so there could be no question of his departure for a few weeks, until they had had time to assemble.

The news that the young heir to the Marquisate would soon go away and forsake the world, soon spread beyond the precincts of the Castle. It caused much regret and sorrow in Castiglione. As often as Aloysius appeared in the town, doors and windows were filled with people who wished to see and greet him. The burghers loudly lamented their misfortune in losing him, so that he often found himself unable to restrain his tears at the sight of theirs. Many of those who had access to the Castle visited him and tearfully expressed their grief. Why, they asked, should he leave the beautiful Marquisate and such loving, affectionate subjects, just as they had hoped to have him for their ruler? Aloysius comforted them kindly, telling them that he was going to seek a heavenly crown, and that it was very difficult for a prince to lead a holy life, for one could not serve two masters. He wished above all things to save his soul, and advised them to try to do the same.

At length all the preparations for the abdication were completed. Most of the relatives concerned had palaces in Mantua, so the Marquis, though still far from well, decided to go thither with Aloysius. As the carriage rolled out of the Castle grounds and through the town, all the people ran to see the last of their dear Aloysius, weeping and lamenting that he would never come back, and they should never see him again in this life.

Aloysius remained only a few weeks in Mantua, where he stayed in the palace of St. Sebastian. During his

sojourn there he followed his usual mode of life, spending all the time he could at the Jesuit College. There he went to Confession and Holy Communion, to the great edification of the whole city. It had become known for what purpose he had come, and everyone venerated him as a saint. When at home, he spent his time in praying and instructing his little brothers, and edified everyone by his pious and holy life.

But still the abdication could not take place; disagreeable delays again intervened. The Marquis had arranged for Aloysius to have a yearly allowance of 400 ducats, and this had been expressly stated in the document presented for the Emperor's approval. But the Rector of the College in Mantua told him that the rules of the Society did not permit this sum to be placed at the disposal of Aloysius, but at that of his Superiors. The Marquis did not wish this, and therefore decided to cancel the allowance altogether; for his stay at the Court of Madrid had involved great expense, and, probably also on account of his foolish passion for gambling, he was deeply in debt to the Jews of Mantua[1]. Aloysius was quite willing for the clause concerning the allowance to be cancelled, but the lawyers made difficulties about it, and expressed the opinion that this would make the whole document invalid. Lengthy discussions and negotiations ensued, till Aloysius at last declared that they might put as many provisions and clauses into the document as they liked, if they would only make haste and get it finished.

At last all was in readiness. On the 2nd of November Duke Vincent, Don Prosper Gonzaga as the next of kin, and other ladies and gentlemen assembled in the palace

---

[1] *Fozzi*, Lettere di S. L. G. 22. Cf. *Schröder*, Life of St. Aloysius 370.

adjoining the Church of St. Sebastian, where the Marquis and his retinue were staying. Immediately before the deed was accomplished, whilst the Marquis was engaged in a discussion with Duke Vincent, Aloysius had an argument with some noblemen of high position, who vainly tried to dissuade him from the step at the last moment. At length the solemn act began. While the long document was being read by Hannibal Persia, the notary, tears rolled unceasingly down the cheeks of the old Marquis. Aloysius alone, usually so grave and pale, looked happy and even gay; Prosper Gonzaga and his brother Francis said afterwards that they had never in their lives seen him look so rosy and merry. One could see, they added, that he was enjoying a long wished-for happiness[1]. After the reading of the deed, by which he formally renounced his claim to the Marquisate of Castiglione and all the freehold lands attached to it, in favour of his brother Rudolph, Aloysius approached the table with a firm step and rapidly signed the document without a moment's hesitation. Rudolph also signed his name, and when he had finished, Aloysius said to him aloud: "What do you think, dear Rudolph, which of us two is the happier now, you or I? You may be sure I am." All who were present, the ladies especially, burst into tears. As soon as the necessary formalities had been completed, Aloysius retired to his room, and spent a whole hour in prayer and thanksgiving for the holy treasure of poverty that God had granted him the grace to obtain. He afterwards said that he had never experienced such abundant spiritual sweetness and consolation as during this hour.

In the meantime all his relatives had assembled in the hall for dinner. Suddenly the door opened, and Aloysius

[1] Bolland. 961 F.

appeared, clothed in the Jesuit habit. He had secretly had one made, and asked the Castle chaplain, Don Luigi Cattaneo, to bless it. He had taken off everything down to the very last item of secular clothing, even his silken stockings, for he would retain nothing that reminded him of the world. All present were so surprised and startled at the sight, that their tears flowed afresh. The Marquis especially was so upset, that he could not master his emotion, and wept throughout the whole meal. Aloysius kept up a cheerful conversation, modestly leading it to appropriate topics, such as the inconstancy of earthly things and the dangers of wealth and rank. He spoke so impressively that the princely assemblage listened to his words attentively and with emotion, and long afterwards spoke of what he had said.

On the following day Aloysius went to take leave of Duke William, his son Vincent, and their wives. In the evening he also bade farewell to his parents, and knelt to receive their blessing. They bestowed it upon him with all their hearts, but God alone knows with how many tears — his father especially was overcome with grief. His mother wished him to take leave also of the ladies-in-waiting, but after a moment's consideration he said: "I will pray for them", and then retired [1].

At last, on the 2nd of November, Aloysius started from Mantua on his way to Rome, there to enter the noviciate. His friends followed with tearful eyes the carriage that bore him away; but he did not shed a tear, so full of joy was his heart.

And why should he weep? He had now gained what he had desired and fought for with so many tears, prayers and sacrifices. How dear his vocation must have been to him, especially now that he was entering upon it under

[1] Bolland. 962 B.

circumstances that exactly fulfilled the desires of his heart, so full of glowing love to God. The Marquis, otherwise so liberal — nay, extravagant even, and not in the least prejudiced against the Society of Jesus — had withdrawn the modest allowance that he had spontaneously and definitely promised to Aloysius, his eldest and most beloved child. He left the castle of his ancestors as a poor pilgrim, like the children of poor parents, dozens of whom knock every year at the monastery doors, bringing with them nothing of consequence except themselves and hearts full of love and enthusiasm for their vocation. So Aloysius too came to knock at the door of the monastery — he, the son of a Marquis and a Prince of the Empire!

But he was not ashamed; on the contrary, he rejoiced, for now he had his desire of being quite poor, like his Saviour, and of being received into the militant Company of Jesus for the love of Jesus alone. He expresses his thoughts on this point very beautifully and touchingly in a letter to the General, Father Acquaviva.

"To-day I have laid aside the garb of the old man and put on the *vestem novi hominis*. I wished to inform your Reverence of this, and to assure you that I do not know how to thank God enough for so great a grace; all the more that He has granted me the consolation of following Him bereft of all things, and poor like Himself. My father has thought fit to withdraw the grant of the sum that he had promised and even pledged himself in writing to give me. But he will provide for the cost of my journey and other incidental expenses. I pray God to order all for the best, and, if it be expedient, to make my father fulfil his promise to the Society. I bring with me letters concerning this matter from the Rector of the College here and from my mother, which I will deliver to you. I now beg your Reverence for the love of God, *genibus humiliter flexis ex*

toto corde, to receive me out of charity into the haven of salvation and safety, and that as soon as possible; for I shall try to cut short as far as I can the visits I am obliged to make on the way. In conclusion I kiss your Reverence's hand.

Mantua, November 2nd 1585." [1]

Such beautiful words speak for themselves, and give a peculiar touch of melancholy and affecting sadness to his farewell to the world. Surely God willed thus to reward him for the faithful love of poverty that he had practised so openly, even at worldly Courts. Aloysius had the true spirit of Jesus, and felt sure of finding it also in the Society. Nor was he disappointed. He was received there with all the more affection and veneration on account of his poverty.

In Mantua, which he had now left behind him, he had six years ago first conceived the idea of forsaking the world; in Mantua he had now taken the first step on the road to freedom, and he was so completely detached from all he was leaving that he took nothing with him of all his rich inheritance, save a Breviary, a linen picture of the Crucified, and a plentiful supply of clothing [2]. "The Lord is the portion of my inheritance . . . it is Thou that wilt restore my inheritance to me" (Ps. xv. 5).

17. In Exitu Israel de Ægypto.

(Loretto and Rome.)

Aloysius took with him from Mantua a suite consisting of the chaplain, Don Luigi Cattaneo, his former tutor Peter Francis del Turco, Dr. Giovanni B. Bono, his valet James Bellarini, and a few other attendants. His brother Rudolph went with him in the carriage as far as the river Po, where

[1] *Jozzi,* Lettere di S. L. G. 22.

[2] *Schröder,* Life of St. Aloysius 372.

he was to embark for Ferrara; but Aloysius scarcely spoke a word to him on the way. In Ferrara the Saint paid a farewell visit to the Duke and Duchess d'Este, to whom he was related. From there he went on to Bologna, intending also to present himself at Florence to the Grand Duke Francis of Tuscany. But his party was stopped at the first town on the Tuscan frontier, and not allowed to pass in spite of all the proofs they gave of their identity; for all were in terror of the plague, and they had not brought with them from Mantua a certificate of health and freedom from infection. Aloysius and his suite accordingly returned to Bologna, where he wrote to apologise to the Grand Duke for his non-appearance, and then proceeded straight to Loretto.

Not only did his own inclination draw him to Loretto, but the duty of fulfilling the vow that his mother had made at his birth, but had never been able to carry out. He now fulfilled it himself, to his great spiritual consolation. He spent nearly the whole day in the "Holy House", where the blessed years of the youth of Jesus with their charming, peaceful and joyous mysteries had been passed; he even declined the invitation given him by the Rector of the Jesuit College to stay there, and preferred to lodge at a little inn, in order to have more freedom for his devotions. He went to Confession, and received Holy Communion there on the morning of his arrival and again on the following day. He could scarcely tear himself away from the Holy House, and spent hours full of sweetest consolation, praying in the sacred rooms where our Saviour and his Blessed Mother had once lived. He had much to think about, and could not cease thanking God for the priceless graces that He had here granted to the human race. And surely it formed not the least subject of his joy and thanksgiving, that he might now, freed from the

trammels of the world, consecrate himself entirely to the service of God in the Society of Jesus. These graces had all come to him from our Lord through the hands of His Blessed Mother, and he could not show gratitude enough for them.

When it became known in Loretto who he was and why he was going to Rome, people pointed him out to their friends, and all were greatly edified that a youth of such noble birth should strive after poverty as eagerly as others strive for riches. On the third day Aloysius at last tore himself away from Loretto, and entered with fresh courage and growing desire upon the last stage of his journey, the goal of which was Rome, the *civitas sancta*.

No wonder that the whole journey was for Aloysius a pilgrimage and a continual prayer. When he rose in the morning, he spent a quarter of an hour in meditation. Then he recited with the chaplain the Little Hours of the Breviary, and finally the Itinerary. On the way he usually rode alone, occupying himself with vocal prayers or meditation; sometimes, however, he would converse with the chaplain on spiritual subjects. He wore a crucifix under his tunic, in order to be constantly reminded of God. His thoughts frequently ran upon the austerities that he hoped now to be allowed to practise, and he pictured to himself the happiness of being sent on the missions to India, like others of his Order. Whilst the horses were being fed at mid-day, he recited Vespers and Compline with the chaplain, and then took a little nourishment. When he arrived at the inn where he and his suite were to spend the night, he at once retired to his room, knelt down before his crucifix and spent an hour or two in prayer. Then he took a long discipline and recited Matins and Lauds for the following day. At supper he contented himself with a slight refreshment, and would have observed

his accustomed fast on Wednesday and Saturday, if he had not been forbidden by the chaplain. Although it was winter, and bitterly cold, for his way lay through the bleak mountainous district near the Apennines, he would never suffer his bed or even his room to be warmed. He had not been accustomed to wear cloth stockings, such as the Jesuits wore in those days, and he found considerable difficulty in getting them off when he undressed. As the chaplain one evening came to his assistance, he found that Aloysius' feet were quite frozen with cold. But even then the Saint would not have a fire lighted, and never again allowed anyone to help him to dress or undress, saying that this was against holy poverty.

At last the travellers approached their destination. Above the green and undulating ridges of the Roman Campagna were seen dimly rising two distant points, Monte Mario and St. Peter's, with its vast halls, soon to bear the mighty cupola. We know from his letter to the Father General how Aloysius had longed to see Rome, the holy city, the seat of the Vicar of Christ, the city of St. Ignatius and his Society; and we can imagine how this first sight of the Chanaan of his heart and the earthly home of his soul must have moved him. With what delight his eyes must have rested on the goal he was nearing, with what fervent thanksgiving to God he at last passed through the gates of the Eternal City!

The travellers dismounted at the palace of Scipio Gonzaga, the Patriarch of Jerusalem. After a short rest, Aloysius at once turned his steps to the house of the professed Fathers of the Society, the Gesù, to present himself to the Father General. Father Acquaviva met him in the garden. Aloysius threw himself on his knees, and humbly begged the General to receive him as a son and subject. The Father General kissed his forehead, greeted him affectionately

as his dear son, and helped him to rise. Aloysius then gave the General a beautiful letter from his father, the purport of which was as follows: He (the Marquis) had thought it his duty for a time to restrain Aloysius from joining the Society, because it had seemed to him that the resolve had been made rather too hastily, and was scarcely likely to prove lasting, on account of his son's extreme youth; but that he now firmly believed Aloysius' vocation to be from God, and would therefore be acting against his conscience if he refused a request made so often and with such persistence. Willingly, therefore, with a heart full of heavenly consolation, he entrusted his son to his Paternity, who would now be a better father to him than he could be. With regard to his Aloysius he would add nothing further, save that in him he was giving to his Reverence what was dearest to him on earth, the hope and the pride of his family, which would now rely upon the prayers of his son and of the Father General, to whom he wished every blessing [1].

Some of Aloysius' suite were present at this his first meeting with the Father General, after which they all returned to their quarters, Aloysius included. The latter did not allow his accustomed devotions to be omitted or shortened in the least. In the evening his valet, whose duty it was to remind him when it was time to end his prayers, fell asleep from weariness, and let him pray till midnight. The tutor, having noticed the servant's negligence, at last put an end to the long vigil.

Aloysius next paid his respects to the Cardinals Alexander Farnese, Louis d'Este, Alessandrino Ghislieri, the nephew of Pius V., Ferdinand Medici, who afterwards became Grand

[1] The letter is dated Mantua, Nov. 3rd 1585, that is to say, on the day immediately preceding the Saint's departure from there.

Duke of Tuscany, and his brother Alexander. They all received him with great cordiality and pleasure; Cardinals Medici and Farnese, in particular, would gladly have persuaded him to stay with them. After these necessary visits of courtesy, Aloysius was free to visit the Seven Churches, where he remained long in deep devotion and tears.

His father had also given him a letter for Pope Sixtus V., which he wished to deliver in person, in order to beg the blessing of His Holiness upon his vocation. When he arrived in the Papal antechamber, he was immediately surrounded by a number of the officials of the Pope's household, who knew what had brought him to Rome, and looked upon him as a marvel. On entering the Pope's presence, he kissed his feet and presented to him his father's letter. The Pope, himself formerly a religious, went at once to the root of the matter, with his wonted quickness and thoroughness. He inquired how Aloysius had decided to join the Society, and whether he had well considered the difficulties he would have to encounter. Aloysius replied that, by the grace of God, he had carefully reflected about everything; whereupon His Holiness praised the Saint's resolve and generous fervour, and dismissed him with his blessing.

It was on a Saturday that Aloysius paid all these visits. On Friday he had fasted on bread and water, and on this day he remained without food until evening. In consequence of this he was overtaken by an indisposition, which, however, soon passed off. On the following morning he received Holy Communion in the Gesù, at the altar of SS. Abundius and Abundantius, after which he heard a sermon, and then went with the Patriarch of Jerusalem to dine with the Father General. Instead of the usual spiritual reading, a member of the College preached a sermon during the meal, the wise reflection and appropriateness of which the Patriarch could not find words enough to praise.

At last, on Monday, the 25th of November, the feast of St. Catherine, Aloysius went with the Patriarch and his attendants to the Jesuit Noviciate of Sant' Andrea, on the Quirinal. The Patriarch said Mass there, and Aloysius received Holy Communion from his hand. On this day also the Father General, who had come to Sant' Andrea, invited them to dine with him.

On the threshold of the noviciate Aloysius took leave of his attendants, and exhorted them also to think of their eternal welfare. He then gave them his last instructions. He charged Dr. Bono to carry his father's letter to Leghorn, to the Grand Duke of Tuscany; to his valet he gave a message for his mother; and the chaplain was to remind his father of the words of the Psalmist (Ps. XLIV. 11): "Forget thy people and thy father's house", — by which Aloysius meant to say that it was his intention now to forget all he had left in the world. The chaplain asked what he should say to Rudolph, and Aloysius replied: "He that feareth God, will do good" (Ecclus. XV. 1). These were his last orders. They all wept in their sorrow at losing so good a master, and went their way. They returned once more before leaving Rome, to see Aloysius for the last time. Aloysius said he had nothing more to say, and would not have seen them, had not the Rector given orders for them to be admitted[1]. The Saint also took leave of the Patriarch, thanking him gratefully for the assistance he had afforded him in furthering his vocation, and promised to pray for him constantly. The Patriarch could not restrain his tears, and told him that he envied him his lot, for he had chosen the better part[2].

The Master of Novices, Father John Baptist Pescatore, now conducted Aloysius to the room where he was to

---

[1] Bolland. 963 A. [2] Ib. 1024 C.

spend the time of his probation. It seemed to the Saint that he was entering Paradise, and he joyfully exclaimed: "This is my rest for ever and ever; here will I dwell, for I have chosen it" (Ps. cxxxi. 14). As soon as he was alone, he fell on his knees and thanked God with tears of joy for having led him into the Land of Promise. He offered himself wholly as a sacrifice to Him, and only begged for the grace to serve His Majesty here worthily, and to die in His service.

Aloysius henceforth kept this day every year as a joyful anniversary, and St. Catherine was one of his favourite patron saints.

At the time of his entrance into religion, he was seventeen years of age.

PART II.

THE SAINT IN RELIGION.

1. The New Home.

Aloysius had now happily found a second home in Rome, and it was dearer to him than the first one in beautiful Lombardy, for it was the home of his heart and soul.

There is something peculiar about Rome; a trait that it shares with no other city in the world. One feels at once as much at home there as in one's native town. Everything attracts one; the ruins of antiquity, the monuments of art, the churches and sacred places, and above all the Lord of Rome, the Pope. At this time and throughout nearly all the rest of Aloysius' life, the Papal throne was occupied by Sixtus V., a highly-gifted, energetic and resolute man. His figure was bent, his face bronzed and bearded, and his eye sharp and penetrating. Of lowly birth, the poor shepherd-boy became a poor Franciscan, and then a Cardinal famed for his love of holy poverty; and now he was a ruler destined to leave behind him such marks of his vigorous government as scarcely one of his predecessors had done. He was to transform the appearance of old Rome by glorious palaces at the Vatican, at St. Mary Major, and at the Lateran; by construction of magnificent streets and aqueducts; and by the erection of the great obelisk. He was to crown St. Peter's with its mighty cupola, clear

the country and mountain districts of the bandits who were a cause of terror to travellers, and regulate the interior affairs of the Church and place them on a firm basis for a long time to come. On the 24th of April, preceding the arrival of Aloysius in Rome, Sixtus had ascended the Papal throne. He himself saw Aloysius, and aided by his experience of religious life, examined his vocation to that state and pronounced in favour of it. But Aloysius, as a member of his Order, was at a future time to have less pleasant relations with this Pope. Sixtus seriously wished to change the name of the Society of Jesus, and also its form of government, and only death hindered him from carrying out his intention. All this took place in Rome while Aloysius was there. In the drama of the world's history, dark and bloody scenes were being enacted. Mary Stuart's head fell under the axe of the executioner, by Elizabeth's order, in 1587; the Guises and Henry III. of France fell victims to the dagger of the assassin, and Henry IV. ascended the blood-stained throne; the Spanish Armada perished miserably in the waters of the Channel in 1588, and with it the star of Spain's greatness began to sink.

The Society of Jesus, of which Aloysius had become a member, was indisputably one of the most powerful instruments that Divine Providence employed to counteract the evil effects of the so-called Reformation by promoting a real reform of the Church in Europe, and to spread the faith in the lands beyond the seas. It is a mixed, apostolic Order, the principal aim of which is to exercise, after the example of Our Saviour, Whose Name the Society therefore bears, a direct influence upon the world for the salvation of souls. It employs for this object all the means at the disposal of the Catholic priesthood, viz. parish work, preaching, missions, scientific instruction, literary work etc.

No other founder before St. Ignatius had placed this aim upon such a broad basis and made it his own. This main object governs all regulations with regard to reception of subjects, their training, and the manner of their subsequent employment. The means — natural and supernatural — used to attain this end are such as place the members of the Society in close contact with the world, without derogating from their close union with God, and keep in view their own souls' well-being as well as that of their fellow-men. The constitution of the Society had therefore to combine with perfect subordination to superiors by obedience, the greatest possible freedom, facility and celerity in the movements of each individual member. The fourth solemn vow of special obedience to the Pope, which places the members entirely at his disposal with regard to work in and for the Church, is the living expression of this spirit. In accordance with these objects, the Society has three different kinds of establishments, corresponding to them: noviciates for training in the interior spiritual life, colleges for instruction in the various branches of knowledge, and houses of the professed or residences for the active work of the ministry.

Such had been the form given to the Society by St. Ignatius when he founded it, forty-five years before the period of which we write, and such the constitutions he made for it. Under his immediate successors in the Generalship it had spread with astonishing rapidity into all Catholic countries, even to Brazil, to the Indies, and to East Asia. Its head was now Father Claud Acquaviva, under whose rule the constitutions were to stand the fiery test of attacks from within and without. This trial, however, was not to cause the slightest break in the Order's victorious course of counter-reform in all the European countries where the faith was in danger. The greater part of the south-eastern

and western parts of Germany had already been won back to the Church, not without the co-operation of the Society; and the scientific training of all the Catholic countries had become almost its monopoly.

In Rome, the chief centre of the Order, the Society possessed three establishments, in accordance with its objects. The first, oldest, and most important of these was the Professed House, on the road leading to the Capitol. It was the residence of the Father General and the professed members of the Society, who were engaged in active work in the care of souls. The famous Church, known as the Gesù, with the tomb of the holy founder of the Society, is one of the finest in Rome, and served as a model for almost all the Jesuit Churches built in the 16th and 17th centuries. Cardinal Alexander Farnese had it built for the Society. It was begun in the year 1568 under the direction of the architect Vignola, who planned it in magnificent proportions and with tasteful mural decoration, and was completed in the year 1575 under Della Porta. Unfortunately the latter lapsed into the exaggerated barocco style in the decoration of the roof and upper part of the church. Not far from the Gesù lay the Roman College (1553), a great educational establishment, and the Gregorian University, founded by Gregory XIII. in the year 1582. The church of this institute, dedicated to the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin, later on made way for the Church of St. Ignatius, which was begun in 1626 by order of Cardinal Ludovisi, but not completed until 1675. In this church Aloysius was one day to find his glorious resting-place. Finally, there was the noviciate, Sant' Andrea, on the Quirinal hill, in the most healthy situation in Rome, and only separated by one street from the Papal palace. It had been erected by St. Francis Borgia in 1566, and later enriched by Bernini's beautiful

rotunda over the tomb of St. Stanislaus, who had died in Sant' Andrea on the 15th of August in the year 1568. Aloysius was the 828th novice who entered here.

With his entrance into the noviciate the second part of St. Aloysius' life begins. Hitherto his exterior life in the world had presented a series of kaleidoscopic pictures; and even his inner life, though always under the influence of the Spirit of God, had yet displayed a certain arbitrariness and lack of discipline. Henceforth his whole life gains stability and proportion. His zeal is kept within limits by obedience, it follows the lead of another's guidance, and does not again exhibit that exterior, conspicuous brilliancy of his early years; but nevertheless who can doubt that the confined stream has still the same force as ever, and that it only gains in depth what it has lost in breadth and extent, — that, indeed, this apparently far more insignificant life in religion stands in reality on a much higher plane than his life in the world? It is the life of a religious vocation, to which the secular life served only as a preparation and first step; it possesses the value of the state of Christian perfection, and is measured by that highest rule of all holiness, the Will of God, which reveals Itself in obedience. Now the life of St. Aloysius presented a wider field for imitation, since he began now to lead the life of a model religious, an imitation of which is suited to the capacity of all, since that life was led under a common rule. Aloysius himself welcomed this life as the fore-court of heaven, and Rome as the happy gate of Paradise. But Rome might also rejoice that this youth had entered her walls; for to the glory of her ancient saints Aloysius added a new lustre — the brilliancy of his youthful sanctity; and to her venerable sanctuaries and sacred spots were to be added his glorious tomb. But above all the Society of Jesus must be considered happy, in

having opened its doors to an angel in the flesh, that he might there lay aside his human form and soar to heaven, though not without leaving behind him the blessing of the inestimable treasure of holiness.

2. Complete Detachment.

(Sant' Andrea 1585—1586.)

Aloysius was now in the noviciate of Sant' Andrea. The first test of a newly-arrived postulant is known as the "first probation", and has for its object to impart to him a closer knowledge of his vocation and help him to make his final decision with regard to it. To this end the postulant is given the rules of the Society to read, and receives instructions concerning their aim and the means employed to attain it, and the demands which they will make upon him, that he may once more examine and test his resolve by the help of this new insight. The order of his day's exercises gives him a slight experience of his new life. The probation ends with a few days devoted to the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, during which the young aspirant once more considers his choice of a vocation in the light of the eternal truths, sets the seal upon it and finally breaks with the world by a general confession, in order to begin an entirely new life. Then he receives the religious habit and is admitted to the common life of the noviciate.

With Aloysius this probation was very short. The difficult journey in winter, the austerity with which he had treated himself, as was to be seen by his blood-stained under-garments, the change of climate, and probably also the mental strain of the efforts he made to enter into the spirit of his new life, brought on an indisposition. He had gone through the long spiritual exercises a very short time before, in Mantua, and had also looked through the

rules. And in the battle he had fought for his vocation during the two years previous to his entrance he had given sufficient proof of the earnestness and steadfastness with which he embraced the religious life. These considerations induced his superiors to allow Aloysius to begin the actual noviciate sooner than usual. As for the habit, he had already donned it in Mantua.

The noviciate, or second probation, is the immediate preparation for embracing the religious state by vows, and is prescribed by the Church for all Orders, in order that the vows may be taken with safety and confidence. The noviciate differs from the first probation, inasmuch as a novice's duty is no longer to exercise himself in speculative consideration of his vocation, but rather to practise himself in it by acquiring the virtues common to the religious life in general, and also those peculiar and necessary to his own Order in particular. For this purpose the so-called "experiments" are of great importance. They consist in certain exercises in which the apostolic vocation of the Society is practically applied, exteriorly as well as interiorly, because not only the virtues necessary for self sanctification, but also those which are required in intercourse with the world — such as detachment, humility, trust in God and zeal for souls — are hereby put into practice. For this reason the novices of the Society, after having made the long retreat, which lasts a whole month, must undertake a pilgrimage in the spirit of apostolic poverty, wait upon the sick in the hospitals, and give addresses and catechetical instruction, according to their capabilities. The novice must lay the foundation of apostolic perfection, and all his duties are arranged with a view to this end.

In these occupations, then, Aloysius passed his time. With other novices, most of the virtues have to be newly

planted and gradually developed; but he already possessed them in a high degree, so that all these tests served only to manifest them and to make them shine out all the more.

The first virtue that the apostolic vocation requires is detachment from all outward things. Aloysius was no longer a Prince of the Holy Roman Empire, surrounded by servants ready to obey his slightest sign. He had left all this behind in the world, and had come to the monastery in complete poverty. A picture on linen of Our Saviour, that he could take about with him everywhere, his clothes, and a breviary — that was all he had brought with him. But now he discovered that the habit he had had made for himself in Mantua, and also his biretta, were of finer material than those worn by his fellow-novices; nor were their breviaries gilt-edged, like his. He had no peace until all he had for his use was exactly like what was used by the others. He would tolerate nothing that distinguished him from those around him and savoured of the world.

Aloysius soon had an opportunity of showing his detachment of heart and freedom from irregular attachment to flesh and blood, family and relations. He had scarcely been two and a half months in the noviciate when the Marquis, his father, died. After his son had entered the Society, a remarkable change had taken place in the behaviour of the Marquis. Although he had always been a good Catholic and a true nobleman, still he had lived in a constant turmoil of worldly affairs, eager as any man could be for the honour and advancement of his house; and, in addition to this, he had had a passion for gambling. But now he devoted himself entirely to pious practices. As he was constantly confined to his bed by gout in the foot, he had brought to him the ebony cross with the silver figure of Our Saviour, before which Aloysius had

always been accustomed to pray in his room[1]. Every evening he had the penitential psalms and the Litany recited, and the whole family assisted at these prayers. Then he took the crucifix in his hand, wept bitterly, struck his breast and invoked the mercy of God with many sighs. He was himself surprised at the abundance of spiritual consolation he experienced, and would then say he knew very well whence these tears came; Aloysius had obtained him this grace by his prayers. As soon as the Court chaplain, Fr. Cataneo, returned from Rome, the Marquis made a general confession to him of his whole life. As his malady now gave cause for serious anxiety, he had himself conveyed to Milan, to seek his cure at the hands of the physicians there. But his death occurred only a few days later. Father Francis Gonzaga happened to be in Milan, and was requested by the family to prepare the Marquis for his approaching end. On seeing Fr. Francis enter his room at an unwontedly late hour in the evening, the sick man at once guessed the object of his visit, and begged him to send some religious to hear his confession. He also made his will that same evening. The following morning, February 13th 1586, he expired in the arms of Father Francis, amid the lamentations of his inconsolable family. His body was interred in the Franciscan Church at Mantua.

Aloysius received the news of his father's death with great calmness. At the wish of his superiors, he wrote to his mother the following lines:

"Most Illustrious Lady, my Honoured Mother in Christ,

The peace of Christ be with you! The death of his Lordship, my father, was for the moment very painful to

[1] This crucifix is still preserved in the convent of the "Virgins of Jesus" in Castiglione. *Chiarenza,* Una giornata a Castiglione 60.

my heart, and I felt oppressed with grief until I had given vent to my sorrow as human nature demands. But now I have reason to feel cheered by the thought that I can now truly call him my father, and thank Our Lord that, as we may hope from His infinite mercy, He has admitted him to heavenly bliss. Let us submit with holy resignation and spiritual joy to the Will of His Divine Majesty! Herewith I conclude, asking your blessing.

Rome, April 1586. Your most obedient son in Christ." [1]

Aloysius Gonzaga S. J.

Before this letter arrived, his mother had expressed to a religious of their acquaintance her wish to receive a few words of consolation from Aloysius, and on learning this he wrote to her again on the 10th of April 1586, as follows:

"I feel that in the midst of all your grief at the loss of his Lordship my father, of happy memory, you need comfort, which, as I see from a letter I have received from the Father Minister of Mantua, you expect from me. I feel impelled to remind you in these lines of what I recommended to you in my last letter, namely, resignation to the Will of God, Who has called my father to Himself by such a happy death, that we may well hope he has entered into the blessed life to which we all aspire. We should therefore rather rejoice than grieve, for he whom we love has reached the goal. Let us then hope in God, by Whose fatherly Providence all this has happened, and Who has ordained all for the best. He will not fail to pray to God for those who recommend themselves to him, especially for your Ladyship and for your House. And as I have not failed to do hitherto, I shall not omit in future to beg of the Divine Majesty to comfort and guide you. I feel

[1] *Fozzi*, Lettere di S. L. G. 24.

greatly consoled to hear how well all has gone with my brother, Signor Rudolph . . . . . for whom, in conclusion, I beg every blessing from God.

Rome, April 10th, 1586." [1]

At first sight one may feel surprised at the brevity of these two letters. But, apart from the fact that they contain in a few words all that can be said on such occasions, and point out the only stable Christian consolation, we must remember that Aloysius was in the noviciate, and thought it his duty, even on this occasion, to put into practice Our Lord's words about detachment. Later on, when it was necessary, he wrote longer letters to impart instruction and consolation.

His companions also were surprised that Aloysius could be so tranquil, seeing how much he had loved his father; but he said that although he took this death very much to heart, still, when he reflected that it was the Will of God, he could not and ought not to grieve over what was pleasing to Him. And he regarded it as a special disposition of Providence that his father had not died before his entrance into the noviciate. Had his death occurred sooner, the Saint's project would certainly have been postponed for a long time; probably the Father General would have refused to receive him, or he himself might have considered it necessary to wait until Rudolph was of age. And who knows what might have happened then? All these circumstances, and particularly the edifying death of his father, comforted Aloysius and inspired him with renewed gratitude to God, Who had arranged everything for him so wisely.

This event especially showed Aloysius' dispositions to his relatives in the world. Except in prayer, he thought

[1] Ib. 26.

of them as little as though they did not exist. When he was asked how many brothers and sisters he had, he was always obliged to think a minute and reckon them up. One of the Fathers once asked him if he was troubled by thoughts about his family. He replied that he never thought of them at all, except when he wished to pray for them; God had given him the grace to think only of what he pleased.

The Saint himself gives us the key to these his dispositions. He remarked on one occasion that his father had always said that one should do or be thoroughly whatever one wished to do or to be, and he meant to put this maxim into practice in God's service. Whoever, then, wishes to be a religious, must be a thorough religious; and the first condition of religious life, and especially of the apostolic life, is complete detachment from flesh and blood, home, and all worldly things. Our Saviour Himself, Who was so indulgent to His Apostles in many other respects, is inexorable on this point. "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell what thou hast, and give to the poor... and come, follow Me" (Matt. xix. 19). "Let the dead bury their dead; but go thou, and preach the kingdom of God" (Luke ix. 60). "No man putting his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke ix. 62). The very nature and essence of the religious vocation requires this detachment, for it occupies all a man's faculties and time. And the interests of our fellow-men, who can only be brought by sacrifice and good example to practise the degree of detachment necessary for them, demand it also. Lastly, God requires it. We must fulfil His holy Will, and He must be the first object of our love: "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me" (Matt. x. 37). A religious has not the same duties towards his family as a secular. Religious are free from

all obligations that are not compatible with their vocation. Their rule is for them the Will of God, and He must be to them father, mother, and all. This is sometimes a hard sacrifice. But God is rich enough to repay us for all. This very death of the Marquis shows us how God blesses those parents who for love of Him give up their children. He takes better care of them than their children could have done. Surely nothing was of more comfort to this noble father on his death-bed, than the thought of having given Aloysius to God. The children in the religious state are the richest and surest blessing of their parents. "I will bless them that bless thee", God assured Abraham (Gen. xii. 3). That is true also of those who forsake all for God.

3. Dead to the Senses.

One aspect of irregular self-love is licence and unbridled indulgence of the senses. Self-denial must be brought to bear upon this also.

Never was Aloysius seen to take a sweet-scented flower or other perfumed object in his hand. On the contrary, he always sought out in the hospital wards those patients who were most repulsive in this respect, and bore everything without the slightest sign of repugnance. At first, certainly, he felt a natural disgust, and turned pale at the very sight of the stained linen of those who were suffering from ulcers and abscesses; for he could not even bear the sight of blood without fainting. But he overcame himself courageously, and made a point of seeking out such things, even snatching them away from his companions in his eagerness [1]. — He never liked useless or worldly conversations, and always tried to change the subject immediately for some spiritual topic; or, if the speaker was

[1] Bolland. 906 B. 975 E.

a person of high rank or authority, he remained silent, in order to show that he wished to speak of other matters. Once, when he was on a visit to Cardinal Vincent Gonzaga at the Ara Coeli, the latter was obliged to leave off talking about the recent death of the Marquis and begin to converse upon spiritual things, since he could not get a word out of Aloysius until he did so [1].

The novices of Sant' Andrea were accustomed to spend their free days at a vineyard in the country. One day they happened to be sent to another villa, and on their way home Aloysius was asked if he did not like this house better than the one they usually visited. But he had not even noticed that they had been to a different place, although it was in quite another direction, differently built and in different surroundings. He could only remember that he had found a chapel in this house that he had not seen in the other. Another time the Father Minister of the house sent him to the refectory to fetch a book that the Rector had left lying at his place. Aloysius was obliged first to inquire where the Rector's place was, although he had already been three months in the house. So strict a custody did he keep over his eyes. Once, during a game, his glance fell upon one of his companions, and he reckoned this as a great fault against modesty.

He seemed to have no sense of taste at all. If he preferred anything in the way of food, it was the worst and commonest he could find. He poured so much water into his wine that it was neither one thing nor the other, and his superiors were obliged to interfere [2]. During meals he occupied his thoughts with the reading going on, and also represented to himself Our Saviour at the Last Supper or tasting the gall and vinegar.

---

[1] Bolland. 905 A. [2] Ib. 905 E.

He constantly offered little ejaculatory prayers for the grace to keep watch over his tongue, and observed the rule of silence most stringently. One day he was sent to accompany one of the Fathers on a walk. He did not know whether he might talk or not, so he passed the time between reading and praying, and his companion did the same. He weighed his words like gold, and sometimes paused or broke off altogether in the middle of what he was saying, if the thought occurred to him that it might not be right to say it. He loved to converse about God, but he loved silence more, because it preserves us from sins of the tongue and promotes union with God.

His greatest penance was having to put on a new habit. This alone could produce in his mien a touch of annoyance. But on being told by someone that this might be due to a certain self-love, he took it very seriously, and made a searching examination of conscience. He found that, although he had had a few thoughts of self-complacency on entering the noviciate, he had not given way to them. Nevertheless, for three months he directed his attention to this point during prayer, to discover the slightest trace of self-love in his heart, to extirpate it and fill himself with holy self-contempt.

Aloysius had indulged in great expectations with regard to all the bodily austerities and penances that his superiors would permit him to practise. But his hopes were not to be fulfilled. On account of his weakened health, they allowed him but little in this respect — never as much as he wished. He was constantly begging for more, and tormented his superiors about it every day, until at last they told him to obey simply, or it would be mere obstinacy on his part.

Aloysius himself acknowledged that the penances he now performed were nothing in comparison to what he

had done in the world, and said he feared that, if he did not constantly practise mortification, he would gradually lose the facility in suffering that he had acquired in the world, and give way to his evil nature[1]. His hardest penance now was to refrain from practising the bodily austerities he so much desired. But he comforted himself with the thought that life in a religious Order is like a voyage in a boat; those who sit quietly in a corner travel as far and as quickly as those who row. Nevertheless he still tormented his body quite enough with fasting and instruments of penance.

Undoubtedly Aloysius had gone too far in his austerities while he lived in the world, and had overstepped the bounds of prudence. Exterior penances are not meant to weaken and ruin our health, but to keep us from sinful indulgence and make us strong and hardy in God's service. But he had been his own master in the world, and God wished to set up in him a heroic model and to make up by his holy excesses for the negligence of others.

It is certain that, through original sin, our sensual flesh is hostile to the spirit, the adversary of God, and a hotbed of constant temptations and sins (Gal. v. 17). Wholesome discipline of the body and the senses is absolutely necessary to preserve the life of the soul, and even that of the body itself. The more we separate ourselves from creatures, the nearer we approach to God, and the more we deny our senses, the more we gain in purity, strength, freshness, and joy of spirit. The joys of the spirit increase in inverse proportion, as the pleasures of the senses diminish. How much more recollection, joy, and strength we should possess, if we could shake off the dominion of the senses! That is the Christian view of mortification,

[1] Bolland. 906 A. B.

and on this principle Aloysius acted. "They that are Christ's, have crucified their flesh with the vices and concupiscences" (Gal. v. 24).

4. Love of Humiliation.

A much more delicate and difficult form of self-denial is love of humiliation: it is the touch-stone of true humility. Aloysius' superiors did not neglect to practise him in this difficult virtue, which does not hurt the body in the least, and is of infinite profit for the soul. His pronounced fondness for bodily austerities gave them the most frequent opportunities. A few days after his admission, the novice-master noticed that he walked with his head bent far too low: so he had a stiff collar attached to his habit, to compel him to walk upright. The other novices were much amused at the martial air this gave Aloysius, but he enjoyed it as much as they.

On one of the fast-days prescribed by the Church this zealous friend of mortification managed to obtain permission to fast on bread and water. The novice-master, who noticed that Aloysius ate scarcely anything at table, ordered him at the conclusion of the meal to return to the second table and eat all that was set before him. One of his fellow-novices, who had noticed what occurred, began during recreation to tease Aloysius about it, saying that his was a peculiar way of fasting, to eat nothing at the first table, in order to get all the more at the second. "What can I do?" replied Aloysius: "as the Psalmist says, 'I am become as a beast before thee, and I am always with thee'" (Ps. lxxii. 23).

Much as he had shunned fine clothes in the world, he now went still farther in this respect, and took a delight in going through the town in a threadbare habit with a wallet on his back, to collect alms for the

poor [1]. On being asked if he did not mind doing this, he replied that he did not in the least; for whoever knew him would be edified by it, and whoever did not know him would simply think he really was a poor man. When he regarded the example of Our Saviour, he found no difficulty at all in doing this. He never made any allusion to his former position in the world. Once, on being asked to which class of the royal pages he had belonged in Madrid, he replied without thinking: "To the first"; afterwards he thought that he had committed a great fault against humility [2].

Nothing was more welcome to him than a public reproof for some fault. He might easily have avoided feeling the mortification of it by thinking of God, since he had his thoughts completely under control; but he did not do so, in order not to lose the merit of the little unpleasantness. And although he felt mortified by it, it was on account not of the humiliation, but of the fault that had occasioned the reproof. In order to put his love of humiliation to the test, the novice-master one day told the Brother in charge of the refectory, whom Aloysius had been appointed to assist for some time, to try him unexpectedly in every possible way, to reprove and to blame him. The Brother did not fail to carry out the order most fully; but he could never succeed in getting out of Aloysius the slightest word of vexation or excuse.

Humility is the most difficult of virtues, and the most difficult but also the most necessary form of humility is to bear humiliations well, and even to love and seek them. Whoever succeeds in this has learned the hardest lesson in the spiritual life; such a one has offered to God the hardest sacrifice, and taken the last stronghold of irregular nature. God is Master in such a soul. Without this love of

[1] Bolland. 975 E. [2] Ib. 907 C.

humiliation a man is never anything but a wavering and untrustworthy soldier of God, in a hundred cases likely to give up — to betray, even — the interests of God's honour for his own. Without it, too, we never become perfectly cleansed from sin, enlightened, and united with God. It is true that these were only little things, in which Aloysius so brilliantly stood the test; but it is just in these daily and insignificant matters that the spirit of humility is manifested, and whoever is truly possessed of this spirit will stand firm in important things also. "If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ" (Gal. i. 10).

5. At the Gesù.

In order to make a change in the monotonous occupations of the noviciate, to keep the mind fresh and alert, and to accustom the novices to practise the virtues of their state under different circumstances, the Society of Jesus sends them after a few months of quiet and recollection outside the monastery walls into the world, either on a pilgrimage to some holy spot, into hospitals or prisons, or into other houses of the Order, there to practise humility by performing common menial offices.

In Rome it was the custom to send the novices for this purpose to the Professed House, the Gesù, for a time. There they were under the care of one of the Fathers, who was their novice-master for the time being[1]. In accordance with this custom, Aloysius was in 1586 sent to the Gesù, much to his delight, as this gave him the oppor-

[1] The Father in charge of the novices at this time was Fr. Jerome Piatti, who afterwards testified so warmly to the holy life led by St. Aloysius and gave an account of his vocation, in a little work entitled: Vocatio B. Aloysii ad Societatem Jesu. Bolland. 896 to 911.

tunity of profiting by the edifying example of the older Fathers. Early every morning he went with his fellow-novices to the sacristy, in order to take his turn with them in serving six or seven Masses. In the interval between one Mass and another, he remained on his knees in a quiet corner of the sacristy where the relics were kept [1], meditating, reciting vocal prayers, or reading. Regarding the sacristan as his superior, he always addressed him with uncovered head, stood up when he passed by, and received his directions as though from God Himself. On Maundy Thursday the sacristan told him to see to the lamps at the Sepulchre. On being asked afterwards how he liked the arrangement of the Sepulchre, he replied that he could not say; he had only paid attention to the lamps, as he had been told to do. To one of the novices, who acted as a sort of prefect over the rest, he showed the respect of a subordinate to a superior, and this to such a degree, that the novice complained to the Rector that Aloysius went too far in his marks of respect and readiness to render service. Aloysius, however, said that the lowest of superiors must be obeyed as readily as the highest in authority, not only out of humility, but in the spirit of generosity to God; for it was a glorious and sublime thing to obey a mere man for God's sake, and all the more so, the less the person in question was endowed with natural gifts and advantages.

At mid-day some of the novices went to help the cook, others to serve in the refectory or read aloud during the meal. Aloysius performed these duties as simply and readily as though he had been accustomed to them all his life. Although he read well and distinctly, it happened on one occasion that he was not well understood, on

[1] Bolland. 972 C.

account of some noise in the refectory. The superintending novice promptly took him to task for this, and dilated upon the spiritual loss those present had suffered on account of his bad reading. Aloysius uttered not a word of excuse, but asked pardon, promised amendment, and offered to begin the reading all over again.

Fr. Piatti once found himself in a strange dilemma on account of his kindness and solicitude for Aloysius: noticing how extremely silent he was, and thinking he needed change and distraction, he ordered him not only to go to the ordinary recreation after the first table, but also to remain for that which followed the second. The Father Minister of the Professed House, who seems to have been a very strict and vigilant man, was astonished on making his rounds to find Aloysius, who was usually so obedient, at the second recreation, although he had shortly before seen him at the first. He ordered him to accuse himself in the refectory of this flagrant breach of monastic silence and perform a public penance. Aloysius accepted it without a word, and did as he was told, without excusing himself by making known the command his superior (Fr. Piatti) had given him. But still he continued to remain at the second recreation, as he had been told to do. The Father Minister, noticing this apparent transgression for the second time, again imposed upon him the same penance. This time Fr. Piatti called the relapsed offender to him after the meal, and told him gravely that it was disedifying to accuse oneself twice of the same fault, and that therefore it was not permissible to do this even in the case of a merely supposed fault; he ought to have told the Father Minister of the real facts of the case. Aloysius replied that he had had some doubt whether he was doing right not to tell him, but, fearing lest he might be yielding to natural sensitiveness and self-love, he had abstained from

excusing himself. In his love of humiliation, Aloysius even went so far as to draw upon himself penances due to the faults of others. And he, so neglectful of his own health, watched with loving solicitude over that of others, and informed his superiors at once if he noticed that one or other of his fellow-novices found it too fatiguing to serve so many Masses.

In the afternoon Aloysius sometimes accompanied one of the Fathers on a visit to the prisons or hospitals. Whilst the priest was hearing the confessions of some of the inmates, the Saint would instruct the others in the Catechism. Also, as is the custom in Italy, he was wont on feast-days to give short exhortations to the people in the public streets and squares; and he did this with so much charity, cheerfulness, and tact, that everyone liked to listen to him, and even bishops stopped their carriages to hear this enthusiastic and fervent preacher. It repeatedly happened that after such addresses he was able to lead to the confessional, as the fruit of his zeal, sinners who had not been to confession for years. The dispositions with which he attended the sick are known to us through a remark once made by him to a companion, as they were going to a hospital. "One must think", he said, "that one is receiving the dead and wounded Body of Our Lord from the arms of His Mother, and has the honour of washing and anointing it."[1] On the days when Aloysius remained at home, he passed part of his time in humble household work. One day, while folding linen with some other novices, he suddenly remembered that he had not yet read anything from the works of St. Bernard, as he was accustomed to do every day. His first impulse was to supply for the omission at once; but, calming his eagerness, he

[1] Bolland. 975 E.

quietly told himself that St. Bernard would only teach him that to obey was the best and safest thing he could do, and so he remained at his work, although he had not been precisely commanded to do so, and might have left off without being disobedient.

Aloysius regarded nothing as more important than simple, childlike, conscientious observance of his rules. One day his relative, Cardinal della Rovere, met him in the sacristy and wished to have a conversation with him; but Aloysius excused himself with a respectful bow, saying that he had not permission to talk to him, and he actually did not speak another word until the Cardinal, greatly edified at such conscientiousness, obtained permission from the Father General for the conversation.

There were naturally some who blamed such exactitude and strictness in the very smallest things, considering it a pious exaggeration [1]; but nevertheless Aloysius was regarded and venerated as a saint by all who knew him. Even at this time, objects that he had used — for example his breviary and another little prayer-book that he was wont to make use of for his devotions — were eagerly sought after. Fr. Piatti, who certainly had the best opportunity of learning to know him, often said that, of all the natural and supernatural gifts, the only one lacking to Aloysius was health, and seeing his great sanctity he only wondered that he had not already worked miracles.

6. At Sant' Andrea again. Aloysius' Life of Prayer. (1586.)

After a stay of two months in the Professed House, Aloysius returned to the noviciate of Sant' Andrea, there

[1] Ib. 972 A.

to pass the rest of his probation time in the ordinary occupations.

The most remarkable characteristic of the holy novice was his extraordinary serenity and cheerfulness of temperament, combined with the extreme maturity of his whole character. Even grey-headed religious could not sufficiently admire the ripeness of his judgment and the prudence and moderation of his conduct, in spite of his extreme youth [1]. Never was he known to utter a hasty or ill-considered word, nor could anyone discover in him a trace of passion or even preference for anything that was not of God or for God. In conversation with others, he expressed his opinion simply and quietly, and never contradicted theirs, even if it did not agree with his own. And yet he did not lack sharpness of intellect or vivacity of character.

During the whole of his noviciate, which, with most, is as chequered by storms and showers as the early spring, Aloysius only thrice experienced a slight disquietude. Once he was distressed because he no longer felt the overflowing spiritual consolation he had been wont to enjoy throughout the whole day, even when not engaged in prayer. Another time he was uneasy because he could never discover any voluntary faults, when making his examination of conscience. And finally, he was one day disturbed by the thought that he had not sufficient talent, and would be of no use at all to the Society. But half-an-hour sufficed to chase away these passing clouds [2].

This great tranquillity of mind was the fruit, in the first place, of the self-conquest he had begun to practise in Florence, and by means of which he had at length succeeded in subduing all the wishes and emotions of his heart, even the holiest, so completely that he seemed to be absorbed

[1] Bolland. 970 B. 972 F. [2] Ib. 965 D.

in God, and wished for nothing but what God willed and how He willed it. A second source of this interior peace was his close union with God by prayer. Indeed, the life of prayer that this saintly novice led was perfect in every respect. In the first place, he was completely penetrated by a sense of the *necessity* of prayer. He considered it absolutely impossible for anyone to attain to true renunciation of self and high virtue, without devoting himself assiduously to prayer and recollection; all hope of progress, he thought, depended upon prayer. All restlessness, dryness, and tedium in the spiritual life came, he said, from neglect of prayer and meditation. On the other hand, he was equally convinced of the *efficacy* of prayer, and its power to overcome all difficulties and attain to every degree of virtue. He called prayer the shortest and most direct way to perfection. Finally, he fully realised the *sublimity* and *beauty* of prayer. Prayer is intercourse with God, and a foretaste of eternal bliss; and therefore, he said, one needed only to try it in order to love and never abandon the practice of it.

It was this threefold conviction of the necessity, power, and sublimity of prayer that urged Aloysius, like all the Saints, to pray, to persevere in prayer, and to practise it with joy and profit.

With regard to the method of prayer, Aloysius had years ago adopted an excellent one, and continual practice had made it easy and pleasant to him. In the evening he carefully prepared the subject for his meditation on the following morning, and took particular care to come to it with a quiet and recollected mind. "A quiet, clear lake reflects distinctly and beautifully the picture of him who looks at himself in the water", he said; "but if the surface of the water is troubled, the picture becomes confused, disfigured, or even destroyed. Thus also the soul of one

who is agitated by passion cannot possibly reflect the picture of God's beauty, although He gazes into the soul during prayer." — Whilst engaged in prayer, he remained so quiet and attentive that he did not even venture to cough. The earnestness with which he penetrated into the subject of the meditation was so great that his body became almost benumbed, and he was scarcely able to rise at the end of the time. He often seemed to be rapt into another world, and shed such copious floods of tears, especially when meditating upon the infinite attributes of God, that his superiors were obliged to devise means to moderate them, lest his eyesight should be injured. It was wonderful what a power he had acquired over his fancy and memory, with the grace of God and continual practice in prayer. He never let his thoughts run upon anything but what he wished, and could bury himself so completely in reflection that no talking or other noise, even in his immediate vicinity, could disturb him. He did not notice when anyone opened the door and looked in while he was at prayer; and once, on being asked by his Superior if he was troubled by distractions, he replied that if all the distractions he had had during the half-year he had passed in the noviciate were put together, they might perhaps occupy the time it takes to say a Hail Mary.

He had more difficulty in vocal prayer; not because he suffered from distractions, but because, as he said, he seemed to be like a person standing before the door of a room full of rich treasures of art, but unable to get in. Owing to the brief space of time in which vocal prayers have to be recited, he could not penetrate as he wished into the meaning and depth of the words, nor taste their full sweetness. Nevertheless God blessed his vocal prayers also with great consolation and the gift of tears, especially when reciting the Psalms of the Divine Office. He was

especially fond of these, and took at least an hour to say Matins alone.

The practice of the various Catholic devotions is an important point, and an excellent means of promoting the spiritual life. Aloysius had four special devotions. The first of these was the devotion to the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. In his father's house and in the midst of his life in the world, it had been a joy to him to serve Mass; and now in the noviciate he could do this to his heart's content. Very often during the day he visited the Blessed Sacrament in the church, or in an adjoining chapel. In order to prepare well for Holy Communion, he divided the week into two parts, the first of which he devoted to thanksgiving for his last Communion, and the second to preparation for the next. On the eve of his Communion-day he would speak with touching piety of the happiness in store for him next morning. Many of his companions, and even those who were already priests, who wished to prepare well for Holy Mass, sought to be with him on such days, in order to be moved to greater fervour by his piety and the ardent love which his words displayed. On the morning of the day itself, his first thought was of the Saviour he was about to receive, and he passed the whole hour appointed for meditation in pious reflections upon the Blessed Sacrament. He sought out a quiet corner of the church to make his immediate preparation and thanksgiving, and his heart overflowed with sweetest consolation. Many other worshippers who saw him, but did not know him, concluded merely from the sight of his fervour that he must have a special devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, and even that he must be a Saint [1]. He spent the whole morning after his Communion in silence and recollection, praying

[1] Bolland. 976 A.

and reading passages from St. Augustine or St. Bernard. Thus the precious seed, planted by St. Charles Borromeo in the child's heart at his First Communion, had grown into a beautiful tree that enriched his whole life and character with its blossoms and fruits. This devotion to the Holy Eucharist was such a marked characteristic of the Saint, that Christian art frequently depicts him in the act of adoring the Blessed Sacrament. And the Church herself has raised an imperishable memorial to this beautiful trait of his piety, in the Collects of the Mass for his feast, in which she commemorates his excellent method of preparation and thanksgiving for Communion, and begs of God to grant us the grace ever to appear at this heavenly banquet adorned with the wedding-garment of grace, whose beauty Aloysius enhanced as with pearls of inestimable value by his pious preparation and copious tears.

A second favourite devotion of the Saint was that to the Passion of Our Lord. The life of suffering and mortification he led naturally urged him to seek in the mysteries of the Passion a model of strength and comfort. Every day at noon he recited an antiphon in honour of the Passion, and placed himself in spirit before the Cross of Our Saviour. He did this, as he himself acknowledged, with as much devotion and fervour as if it had been Good Friday.

His third devotion was his ardent love of Our Lady. Since his sojourn in Florence she had been the Queen of his heart and the guiding star of his life, and he never tired of thinking of her, honouring her, praising and loving her, especially now that he could appreciate the inestimable benefit he owed to her in his vocation. In his letters to his mother he frequently recommends her to have a great devotion to the Blessed Virgin, holds up to her in her trials the example of the Mother of God and encourages

her to be faithful in the service of the Queen of Heaven, which was a far higher honour than to be lady-in-waiting to the Queen of Spain [1].

Lastly, Aloysius had a special devotion to the holy Angels. Virginal souls have a certain affinity to the Angels, and always feel attracted to them. His veneration for these blessed spirits was so well-known to his companions that, when Fr. Vincent Bruno was about to publish a book of meditations, he asked Aloysius to write the meditation on the Holy Angels, and the Saint joyfully consented. Thus originated the little "Treatise upon the Angels, especially the Holy Guardian Angels", which is generally awarded the first place among his writings. After having cited the principal passages of Scripture in which the Angels are mentioned, and having thus placed his meditation on a firm basis, he speaks in the first part of the Angels in general, showing the necessity of devotion to them, first, from the example of the Church, secondly, from their nature and dignity, thirdly, from their number, and lastly from their ninefold order. It is remarkable, and very characteristic of Aloysius, that he unites devotion to the Holy Angels with his favourite virtue of humility in this first part of the meditation. "Consider how fitting it is, that on the feast of the invincible Archangel the Gospel of the virtue of humility is read; for while proud Lucifer, on the one hand, was precipitated from his lofty throne in heaven down into the depths of hell, because he presumed to arrogate divine honour to himself, the humble Archangel Michael and the whole host of the good Angels were highly honoured and raised to the highest rank, because they submitted to their Creator and, full of zeal for His honour, opposed the proud serpent (Apoc. xii).

---

[1] *Jouzi*, Lettere di S. L. G. 32, 60 f.

The same Gospel is also read on the feast of all the Angels who, together with St. Michael, gained their crowns of glory by the virtue of humility, in order that everyone may learn the eternal and unspeakable decree of God, that no one can attain to the glory of the Angels by any other way than the path of humility which they were the first to tread. Indeed, even Christ our Saviour attained the glory of His Sacred Body by means of this blessed virtue, for, as the Apostle says (Phil. ii. 8, 9): 'He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death.... For which cause God also hath exalted him.' It would be surprising, therefore, if the faithful were to try to go to heaven by another road than that traversed by their Head.... O Holy Angels, lead me by your help along the royal road of humility which you were the first to tread, in order that I may deserve after this life to behold the Face of the Eternal Father, and to take the place of one of those angels who fell from heaven by pride."

The second point of the meditation treats of the three Angels who are mentioned by name in Holy Scripture: SS. Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael. In the considerations upon the deeds of St. Raphael, Aloysius describes in general the ministry of the holy Guardian Angels, and their care of man before his birth, during life, and after death; and all this is skilfully illustrated by the story of the younger Tobias.

A colloquy with God after the meditation teaches us "to beg of Him, Who bestowed such abundant graces upon the Angels, to grant unto us also through their intercession the grace to imitate their humility, charity, and purity". In the application Aloysius then sums up in seven points the lessons to be drawn from this meditation. The first three again touch with great emphasis upon humility; the three following treat of zeal for souls and the right way to combine

outward activity with the spirit of prayer; and the seventh teaches us always to bear in mind that the Angels are witnesses and judges of our morals and our conduct.

A slip of paper has been preserved, upon which Aloysius had noted down for his own use a few "pious practices in honour of the Holy Angels": "Imagine yourself standing in the midst of the nine choirs of Angels, as they pray to God and sing that hymn of praise: '*Sanctus Deus, Sanctus Fortis, Sanctus Immortalis.*' Repeat this prayer nine times in union with them. — Recommend yourself three times daily to the special care of your Guardian Angel. Every morning and evening, and during the day, when you visit the church and pray at the altar, recite the prayer: '*Angele Dei*' [1]. — Remember that you must follow the guidance of your Angel, like a blind man who does not know the way, and trusts entirely to the care of the person who leads him."

These written notes left by Aloysius show us what a devotion he had to the Holy Angels, and the particular form it took.

One of the effects of his frequent and fervent prayers was an uninterrupted union with God. It cost Aloysius more effort to put the thought of God from his mind than it does others to turn their thoughts away from creatures to God. When not permitted to hold intercourse with God, he felt he was not in the right atmosphere; his soul could not breathe freely, as it were, and even his body suffered from the violence he had to do himself. Nevertheless he showed the greatest exactitude and attention to all the demands of obedience and charity. In the midst

[1] "Angel of God, who art my guardian, enlighten, guard, direct, and govern me, who have been committed to thee by the Divine clemency." (100 days Indulg. Pius VI., Oct. 2nd 1795.)

of exterior occupations God filled his soul with the sweetest consolation, so that his countenance often glowed with joy and his heart beat quickly with the sweet emotions of grace. Thus his life was really a continual prayer, and his strength was consumed in this noble service like the perpetual lamp before the Blessed Sacrament. His weakness increased, and his headaches became more severe. On this account his superiors shortened his time for meditation; they let him sleep longer, forbade him all bodily austerities and even the frequent use of pious ejaculatory prayers, ordered him to think of God as little as possible, and kept him constantly occupied with exterior duties. Aloysius took all this cheerfully and willingly, and did his very best to obey. Once one of the Fathers told him he would try to persuade the Father General to allow him to make an hour's meditation again. But no sooner did Aloysius perceive that he felt unusually great joy at the hope of this, than he endeavoured with all his might to regain the holy indifference which is necessary for perfect obedience. His great trouble was, that he really did not know how not to think of God; try as he would, his thoughts escaped his control and turned to God again in spite of his efforts. "I do not know what to do", he once said to one of his companions; "Father Rector orders me not to think of God, so that I may not overstrain my head, and not to think of Him is the very thing that costs me the most effort." In order to make up to some extent for the omission of his ordinary prayers, he went into the church, greeted the Blessed Sacrament by a devout genuflection, and then retired immediately. If God granted him consolation, he begged Him with childlike simplicity to have pity on him and "depart from him".

This was indeed a sublime life of prayer, more heavenly than earthly in its joy and blessedness. In comparison

with this, even the high degree of prayer and contemplation he had practised in the world was but as the first growth of the water-lily in the dim depths of the lake; now it had reached the sunlit surface, built its throne of velvety green leaves, unfolded its spotless blossoms, and gently rocked upon the waters of the quiet creek, surrounded by the light of day, — a beautiful picture of heavenly peace. Thus did the soul of Aloysius rock upon the quiet, blissful waves of spiritual consolation and union with God. This union with God is, in truth, the goal and prize of all earthly endeavours; it is perfection itself, for it is union with our last end, and the sweet foretaste of heavenly bliss. One cannot think of this beautiful land of union without a certain homesick longing, and one is constrained to sigh with the Psalmist: "Who will give me wings like a dove, and I will fly, and be at rest?" (Ps. liv. 7.) The goal excites our desire, but the road to it frightens many, for it is no other than that followed by Aloysius; the path of earnest endeavour to purify the soul by detachment, mortification, and the continual practice of prayer. This path is steep, but sure and safe. The greater the decision and generosity with which we tread it, the quicker we arrive at the goal. All other paths are wrong turnings, that only take us out of our way. God will never unite Himself to a sordid, unclean heart. An immortified soul will seek Him in prayer, but will not find Him; whilst God Himself will seek and visit those who practise mortification. We must therefore pray and mortify ourselves; the one is of no use without the other. That is, briefly, the essence of the spiritual life. Without prayer there can be no true mortification, and without mortification no prayer. "If any one love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and will make our abode with him" (John xiv. 23).

7. A Neapolitan Winter.

(1586—1587.)

Aloysius remained in the noviciate at Sant' Andrea until October 1586. Then his novice-master, Fr. Pescatore, a man of most holy life, fell ill, and the Father General, Fr. Acquaviva, thought it would do him good to go to Naples for change of air. The invalid one day asked Aloysius if he would like to go to Naples with him, and the Saint replied at once, without further reflection, that he should like it very much. But when he heard not long after that he was really to accompany his sick novice-master, together with two other novices who were also delicate and in need of a change, he greatly regretted this hasty answer; for he thought it had occasioned the arrangement to be made, and therefore resolved never again to make known his inclinations, but to leave everything to the will of his superiors. Still he was pleased to go, for he hoped by this means to learn how he ought to behave when on a journey and in intercourse with seculars. On the 27th of October Fr. Pescatore left Rome, accompanied by Aloysius, a French novice named Jean Pruinet, and George Elphistone, a native of Scotland, who afterwards became Professor of philosophy at Dôle, and who has left us the details of this journey. Just before losing sight of St. Peter's, Aloysius saluted the holy city once more, with the antiphon: *"Petrus Apostolus et Paulus Doctor gentium . . ."* [1]

The road from Rome to Naples passes through Velletri, and is nearly the same as the ancient Via Appia. It is diversified by charming scenery; on the right and left are

[1] "Peter the Apostle and Paul the teacher of the Gentiles have taught us thy law, O Lord."

beautiful views of mountains, plain and sea, and the most remarkable ruins of antiquity are scattered along the route. In Fondi, the first Neapolitan town, in a valley planted with orange and lemon-trees, stands on cyclopean walls the ancient castle of the Colonna, where the Countess Julia Gonzaga-Bozzoli, wife of Vespasian Colonna, was once within an ace of falling into the hands of the pirate Haireddin, who had made a bold assault upon the castle (1534)[1]. The nearer one comes to Naples, the more magnificent is the almost tropical profusion of palms, pomegranates, aloes, and oranges, and when passing the two bays of Gaëta and Bajae, the view of land and sea is positively entrancing.

On account of his illness, Fr. Pescatore had to travel in a litter, and there was room in it for one of his companions. Aloysius wished to decline this place of honour during the journey, in favour of one of his fellow-novices, because, as he said, he could well ride; but in reality because he wished to make the sacrifice of the company and conversation of his novice-master, for whom he had the greatest veneration and attachment. But as he was the weakest of the three, he finally had to give in and take his place in the litter. Determined to mortify himself somehow, he rolled up his over-coat into a bundle and sat upon it, thus enduring far more discomfort than if he had made the journey on horseback. He recited the breviary and other prayers with his novice-master, and profited eagerly by the opportunity to indulge in spiritual conversation to his heart's content. He asked all kinds of questions, and his master answered him gladly, knowing that every word fell upon good ground and would bring

[1] *Weiss,* Lehrbuch der Weltgeschichte IV. Part 1, p. 435. *Rittershusii* Duces Mantuae, tab. A.

forth fruit a hundredfold. At every inn there was a holy strife among the travellers as to who should leave the best food and bed to the others. Aloysius said afterwards that he had made more progress in the spiritual life during the few days of this journey than in several months in the noviciate. At last, on the feast of All Saints, they arrived at Naples, then already a city with 200,000 inhabitants, under the Spanish supremacy. A viceroy, who, however, exercised the authority and led the life of a king, ruled over the two Sicilies in the name of Philip II.

The Society of Jesus had at this time two houses in Naples; the Professed House established in 1579 and the College in 1554. In the latter was the noviciate. Here Aloysius was to live, since this house, with its twofold use, was just suited for the end his superiors had in view. Although still a novice, he was to begin the course of studies usual in the Society, and to follow the lectures on metaphysics that were just beginning. Probably this was an attempt on the part of his superiors to draw his mind away from its exhausting interior activity by means of this new exterior occupation. His professor was Fr. Giovanni Camerota, who later on bore witness to the great talent and high perfection of his saintly pupil[1]. He especially praised his great piety, modesty, and humility, and said that Aloysius had never missed an opportunity of humbling and abasing himself. The vivacious Neapolitans could not understand the indifference Aloysius showed to the sights of the town and the natural beauty of its surroundings; for him, at least, the old proverb "See Naples and die" seemed to have no meaning. They showed more appreciation for his untroubled calmness and conscientiousness in word and deed, as also for the kindness and amiability

[1] Bolland. 978 B.

with which he took all in good part, put the best possible interpretation upon everything, and always tried to allay any irritation on the part of others [1].

Nothing was more repugnant to Aloysius than to be made much of. As far as possible, he always concealed his high rank, and when the news came that Pope Sixtus V. had raised his relative Scipio Gonzaga, Patriarch of Jerusalem, to the Cardinalate, he showed as little interest as though it did not concern him in the least. He sought by preference the society of the lay brothers, and was eager to be sent to serve in the hospitals and prisons. To his great joy he was given for out-door wear an overcoat so short and so threadbare, that anyone else would have called the attention of the Brother of the wardrobe to it; but he said nothing, and only rejoiced that his superiors did not seem to notice it either, although as a rule they were especially solicitous about him, knowing that he took no care of himself. Another time he was even left without sheets for his bed, and made no complaint.

The Rector of the College, himself inclined to the practice of austerities, allowed him more bodily penances than he had been permitted to practise in Rome; indeed, he was just the man for our Saint in this respect. In order that all might be edified by the example of Aloysius, the Rector had placed him in the largest room, where a great many students slept together. This made his headaches worse, and he suffered many sleepless nights, so that he had to be assigned a separate room. But this apartment was unfortunately under a staircase and passage where all the others hurried up and down the first thing in the morning, so that he did not get much rest even here, particularly in the early morning hours, when he began to feel inclined

[1] Ib. 979 A—D.

to sleep. But Aloysius thanked God for this discomfort as for a special favour.

When the young scholastics went out to the Professed House for Vespers in the church there, the Father Minister stood at the door; when the weather was rainy, he sent the delicate ones back — but strangely enough he let Aloysius pass out. In addition to his constant headaches, he now had an attack of erysipelas, accompanied by fever. Evidently the climate of Naples did not agree with him, and as soon as he was convalescent, his superiors decided to recall him to Rome. So he returned to the Eternal City on the 8th of May 1587, accompanied by Fr. Gregory Mastrilli.

A special Providence seems to watch over the Saints. Naples, the seat of so much enjoyment and even of health for most people, brought Aloysius only ill-health. But he preserved his serenity, and was everywhere the same. Whoever desires only God and the sanctification of his own soul, makes progress everywhere and under all circumstances. That is the advantage of a supernatural goal; one can strive for it everywhere, in the hut and in the palace, in poverty and in riches, in good and bad fortune, and best of all in trial and suffering. "To them that love God, all things work together unto good" (Rom. viii. 28). Besides, Providence seems to have had other plans also in connection with the stay of our Saint at Naples. The Blessed Charles Spinola, one of the Japanese martyrs, who was one of Aloysius' fellow-students there, took with him to the far East the remembrance of his virtue and sanctity. In the terrible prison of Omura the thought of Aloysius was his comfort and joy, and he wrote begging for a Mass to be said at the altar of his holy Father Ignatius and another at that of Aloysius, who had then already been beatified, in order that these two chosen souls might

obtain for him by their intercession the fulfilment of his wishes [1]. The less Aloysius troubled about the glories of Naples, the more did Naples afterwards honour him. The rooms once occupied by him in the old College are held in great veneration. The city includes him among its patrons, and honours him as such to the present day [2]. And God rewarded the veneration shown by the Neapolitans for the Saint by a supernatural phenomenon in connection with his relics, similar to the miracle of St. Januarius [3].

8. The Student of Secular and Religious Learning.

(Rome 1587—1589.)

On returning from Naples in the month of May, Aloysius was sent to the Roman College to continue his studies. Many of his former companions in the noviciate had preceded him thither, and rejoiced to have him again with them as a fellow-student. And he too was happy to be allowed to study in Rome, at the principal College of the Society.

To his unspeakable joy, shown by the unusual brightness of his appearance, Aloysius took his first vows in the autumn of this year (1587), on the Feast of St. Catherine. The ceremony took place during Mass, which was said by the Father Rector, Vincent Bruno. Aloysius wrote to his mother on this occasion as follows:

"I write to inform your Ladyship of the gift I have made of myself to the Divine Majesty by my vows, on the Feast of St. Catherine. I beg of you to thank God with me for this favour, and to obtain for me by your

[1] Bolland. 888 F.

[2] *Narbone,* Dieci glorie di S. L. G. 123.

[3] See below, part 3, p. 271—272.

prayers the grace to be faithful to the vocation to which He has vouchsafed to call me, and to make progress in it, in order that after this life we may enjoy Him together in heaven, where He so longingly awaits all His own.

Rome, Dec. 11th 1587." [1]

Having taken these first vows, Aloysius now entered the second of the various classes of which the Society of Jesus is composed, viz. that of the students or scholastics, who are really religious and belong to the Society, but have not as yet attained the final rank in it, because they are still undergoing their training. Their special duties are to make earnest progress in virtue and to prepare for the priesthood by acquiring the necessary branches of knowledge.

In both these respects Aloysius set the best example possible. Until the autumn of 1587 he was occupied with the study of philosophy, which he had resumed in Naples. He showed such marked aptitude for this branch of study that Fr. Paul Valle and the other superiors of the College appointed him to defend in a public discussion theses covering the whole range of philosophy. For the sake of giving more éclat to the discussion, it was to be held in the large aula of the College, in the presence of Cardinals Scipio Gonzaga, Della Rovere, and Vincent Lauro. Aloysius was very troubled that the honour of defending the theses should fall to his lot, especially as the discussion was to be held with such unusual ceremony. He tried to escape this distinction; but finding all his requests in vain [2], his love of humility hit upon another plan, and he asked Fr. Mutius de Angelis if he might purposely give

[1] *Jozzi*, Lettere di S. L. G. 28.

[2] Bolland. 982 B.

incorrect answers. The Father, however, dissuaded him from this, and Aloysius at last gave way. One of the doctors who were attacking the theses was so unfortunate as to let fall, in the preamble to his objections, a few complimentary remarks about the noble birth of his opponent, whereupon Aloysius blushed so hotly and grew so confused that all present, especially Cardinal Lauro, pitied him sincerely. He showed his displeasure by answering the arguments of this doctor somewhat curtly. The brilliant success of Aloysius' defence was much applauded by all, and the Cardinals wondered that, with his delicate health, he could have made such progress in his studies [1].

In the autumn of this year (1587) Aloysius began his course of theology. His professors were Fathers Augustine and Benedict Giustiniani, both Genoese, and the Spaniards Fr. Gabriel Vasquez and Juan Azor, all men of great learning. In this branch of study also Aloysius showed a surprisingly clear and keen intellect, ready comprehension and mature judgment, so that his masters acknowledged him to be the only student for whom they had to prepare themselves carefully, in order to give correct answers to all his questions. In the months of February and March 1588 Aloysius received at short intervals the tonsure and the four minor orders, thus entering the ranks of the clerics. This was for him a step farther away from the world into the sanctuary of the Church, and a new incitement to make progress in virtue.

There are certain virtues especially appropriate to the students of the Society, which may be called scholastic virtues. None of them were wanting in Aloysius.

In the first place, he was diligent, and applied himself in all earnestness to good and solid study. He did not

[1] Ib. 1025 C.

learn anything and everything, but kept to the lectures of his professors and the works of St. Thomas, on account of the clear and accurate method of this Doctor. He did not like new or unusual opinions. Never would he leave a difficulty unsolved; if he could not clear it up himself, he asked his professors either at the lecture or in private. When he went to them for this purpose, he always spoke in Latin, and withdrew immediately when the explanation had been given. On one occasion Fr. Giustiniani had given him a work of St. Augustine ("De bono perseverantiae"), telling him to read a page in it about predestination. Aloysius did not read a line more than the Father had pointed out, although on the following page there were ten lines more upon the same subject, which his master had overlooked.

In his behaviour towards his professors Aloysius was full of humility, respect and docility. He never wore his biretta in their presence, unless they expressly told him to put it on, and never entertained an opinion differing from theirs. Nor did he ever complain that they were too slow or too quick in giving their lectures, but always spoke of them with the greatest respect.

Towards his fellow-students he was most modest and obliging. He was fond of discussion, and disputed with power and insight, but always with great modesty, never allowing a sharp word to escape him or raising his voice. He never interrupted anyone, but gave everyone time to speak his mind; and when his objections were fairly met and answered, he yielded the point at once. He offered to take anyone's place in disputing, if he could thus render a service, and told the scholastic in charge of the discussions that he might apply to him whenever he needed a substitute for one of the others.

As Aloysius was in such delicate health, and had not been accustomed to taking down lectures, his superiors had arranged for him to have a professional scribe to write for him. But he tried to gradually dispense with this arrangement, sometimes only having the principal points copied from the lecturers' note-books, and sometimes taking short notes himself during the lectures and supplementing them afterwards from those of his companions; for he thought that holy poverty forbade any outlay that was not quite necessary, even though his mother was only too willing to pay any such expenses that were incurred for him. He readily lent his note-books and manuscripts to anyone who wished to use them, and never asked for them to be given back, but waited until the borrower returned them of his own accord. He would not keep more books in his room than were absolutely necessary, preferring to take the trouble of going to the library when he had to look up anything, out of love of poverty. At last he had for his own use only a Bible and the *Summa* of St. Thomas Aquinas. But on hearing that one of his fellow-students had not a copy of the *Summa,* he asked his superior's permission to give him his own, saying that he could borrow one from the student who shared his room. His zeal for study did not prevent him from often visiting the Blessed Sacrament, especially before attending the schools, nor from performing menial offices in the house and giving food to the poor at the door [1].

Such an example and such lovable virtue could not be without effect. The professors held him up as a model of sanctity, and even the non-resident students of the College took pleasure in watching him during the lectures, and often remained standing in the ante-chambers after

[1] Bolland. 982 F.

school, in order to see him pass and be edified by his modesty. The sight of his recollected look, his gentleness, humility, and piety moved them also to devotion, and the remembrance of it was present to them for days after [1]. Wherever he appeared, gravity and recollection followed in his train, and he raised all minds and hearts to God by his gentle, spiritual conversation. He often gave short addresses at the meetings of the Congregation of the Children of Mary, and the students listened to his words as to those of a Saint [2]. Fr. Mutius Vitelleschi, later on General of the Society, who was a witness of his holy life, said afterwards that he had often thought St. Thomas must have been just like him, full of wisdom and holiness.

Thus Aloysius knew how to combine the pursuit of virtue with zeal for study, so that the one did not injure the other. He wished to be a disciple not merely of secular and religious learning, but also of the science of the Saints. The laurel wreath of science is certainly a glorious and noble adornment, but still more glorious is the crown of wisdom. Its flowers do not fade, and it is transfigured by the light of immortality. "And if I should have prophecy and should know all mysteries, and all knowledge . . . and have not charity, I am nothing" (1 Cor. xiii. 2).

9. The Master in the Science of the Saints. Humility.

Aloysius was not a mere disciple, but a master of the science of the Saints. This science consists in the love of God. But love, like a queen, has her attendants, and these attendants are the other virtues. She makes use of them for defence, for adornment, and as the instruments

[1] Bolland. 980 F. 982 D. E. F. [2] Ib. 982 D.

of holy actions. The notes left by Aloysius show how he strove after perfection, the wisdom and science of the Saints, and especially after the foundation of all virtue.

"Above all", he writes, "you must remember that you are made for God, and that it is your duty to live for Him, because He has created, redeemed, and called you; whence it follows that you must abstain not only from every bad action, but also from indifferent or useless ones. On the other hand, you must zealously strive to let every interior or exterior act proceed from virtue, so that you may draw ever nearer to God. In order to regulate your service of God more particularly, establish as your guide these three principles:

"1. You must remember that you, like all other members of the Society of Jesus, are specially called to serve under the standard of Christ and the Saints; whence follows, that you must consider every work, every occupation and exercise only in the light of your vocation, and seek it or avoid it according as it is in conformity with the examples of Christ and the Saints, or opposed to them. To this end you must strive to become familiar with the life and actions of Christ by meditation, and with the lives of the Saints by diligent and attentive reading."

"2. The second principle that must govern your desires is this: You will lead a religious and spiritual life so far as you allow yourself to be guided by the rules of eternity *(secundum rationes aeternas)* and not of time *(secundum temporales)*, so that, if you love, desire, or rejoice at anything, you do so from supernatural motives; and likewise if you hate or despise anything. And you must be convinced that herein consists the spiritual life."

"3. The third principle is this: Since the devil tempts you most by thoughts of vanity and self-complacency, because this is the weakest spot of your soul, you, on the

contrary, must pay the greatest and most constant attention to these temptations, and seek to overcome them by humility and interior as well as exterior contempt of yourself. To this end you should lay down for your own particular use a few rules which may be of help to you in your endeavour to acquire this virtue, as you may learn it from the teaching of Jesus Christ and by experience."

Here follow two rules for making progress in humility.

"The first means is to remember that although this virtue is most becoming to man, on account of his lowliness, nevertheless *non oritur in terra nostra* (it does not grow upon our earth), but must be obtained from heaven by prayer *ab illo, a quo est omne datum optimum et omne donum perfectum* (to Him, from Whom every best gift and every perfect gift comes). Since, then, you are proud, force yourself to ask this virtue of the infinite Majesty of God, its first Source, with all the humility of which you are capable, and ask it through the merits and intercession of the deep humility of Jesus Christ, Who, *cum in forma Dei esset, exinanivit semetipsum, formam servi accipiens* (when He was in the form of God, emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant)."

"The second means is to have recourse to the intercession of those Saints who have especially excelled in this virtue."

"Remember, first, that if the Saints while on earth merited to obtain this virtue in such a high degree, they must certainly now be still more worthy and deserving, since in heaven they are far more pleasing to God than they ever were on earth. And as they no longer need to humble themselves for their own sake, since by this virtue they have already won their way to the heights of heaven, beg of them to obtain for you from God this virtue of humility."

"Secondly, consider that on earth everyone naturally tries to help those who follow the calling in which he has distinguished himself. For example, a great general who frequents the King's Court will recommend to his royal master those who devote themselves to service in the army; a distinguished man of letters will patronize those who follow a literary avocation; a great architect or a mathematician will help those who study architecture or mathematics. So too in heaven those who excelled in some particular virtue more than in others, whilst they lived on earth, will most favour and help those who are striving most to acquire these virtues, and who seek their intercession in order to obtain them. These considerations should encourage you, in the first place, to have recourse especially to the Blessed Virgin Mother of God, for she excelled in the virtue of humility far beyond any other mere creature. Then hasten to the holy Apostles, to St. Peter, who said of himself: *'Exi a me, Domine, quia homo peccator sum'* (Depart from me, o Lord, for I am a sinful man), and to St. Paul, who, although he had been rapt into the third heaven, had yet such a humble opinion of himself that he said: *'Venit Jesus peccatores salvos facere, quorum primus ego sum'* (Jesus came to save sinners, of whom I am the chief).

"The first of these two thoughts will help you to understand how powerful these Saints are with God in obtaining for you this virtue; and the second will show you not only how much they are able to do, but also how willing they are to do it." [1]

[1] Cf. *Cepari*, Edition of 1862 (Appendix), p. 469. In order to reproduce as faithfully as possible the style of the Saint's writings, we have retained in the translation the Latin form of those passages which are written in this language in the Italian original. In his letters also Aloysius was fond of introducing Latin phrases and even sentences.

Thus did Aloysius think of humility, and thus he sincerely strove by every possible means to acquire it. He practised this virtue particularly in three respects.

In the first place, he did all he could to sink his personality and keep in the background. He never spoke of himself, but strove to conceal not only his natural, but even his supernatural gifts. He shunned like fire any mention of his former rank or position. Dr. Zucchi, the Pope's physician, once visited Aloysius, and was incautious enough to make some allusion to the Saint's noble birth. Aloysius blushed as though he had suffered a humiliation, and said he was only a poor religious and no longer what he had formerly been. He spoke no more of the two Cardinals who belonged to the Gonzaga family than if he had had no connection with them. He regretted being of nobler birth than most others, since, however he might try to avoid it, it was impossible that his rank should not sometimes be alluded to. It pained him greatly when any special consideration or attention was shown to him. Once he had preached a sermon in the refectory on the Feast of the Purification. Father Piatti publicly praised it in his presence, whereupon Aloysius blushed deeply and was covered with confusion. In order to avoid being conspicuous in any way, he shunned any exception that might attract attention to him; and for this reason he would not eat at the table for the sick and convalescent. While he was still studying philosophy, it was proposed to give him a theologian to share his room; but he regarded this as unbecoming. Much less would he accept a separate room, which his superiors would willingly have given him on account of his ill-health.

Secondly, Aloysius always sought out the worst and commonest of everything for himself and his own use. Whenever he was free to do so, he sought the society of

the lay brothers rather than that of the scholastics and professors [1]. He often accompanied the Brother cook to market, and even walked on the left side of him, until his superiors forbade it, saying that he must respect his own dignity as a cleric. He asked in advance the favour of being allowed to teach the lowest class of Latin grammar as soon as he had completed his theological studies, and also begged to be made prefect of the rooms in the Seminary, knowing that if he held this office he would be the servant of all. Indeed, he already made himself as far as possible a man-of-all-work, going to help in the kitchen several times a week, giving food to the poor, and sweeping the rooms and corridors. He also acted as lamp-cleaner for several years [2]. In honour of these acts of humility, it became the custom in the Roman College for the Fathers, with the Provincial and the Rector at the head, to assemble on the Vigil of the Feast of St. Aloysius and sweep the corridor leading to the schools, which had so often been hallowed by the feet of the Saint — to the huge delight of the junior students, who crowded to look on, but who were nevertheless edified by the sight [3].

Thirdly, Aloysius studiously sought opportunities of humbling himself, wherever he could. Once he asked permission to give a short address in Spanish, hoping thus, as he did not know the language perfectly, to draw down upon himself some humiliation before his fellow-students. He spoke in such depreciatory terms of his knowledge of Latin, that the Father Rector gave him a room-mate to examine him and help him on in that subject. He often posted himself at the great gate of the day-school, and asked the pupils who went in and out to give him alms

---

[1] Bolland. 986 A. [2] Ib. 985 C.

[3] *Maineri,* Vita di S. Luigi Gonzaga, Prato 1885, p. 180.

for the poor. When he went into the city to beg, it was difficult to say which of the two was more dilapidated — his hat or his habit [1]. If he were seen going about with a duster and a long bamboo cane to remove cobwebs, one might be sure that one of his relatives or some other important personage was in the house [2].

The views of the saints about humility are the most correct and the most profound. Humility is the virtue that restrains us from going beyond our limitations and trying to be more and do more than we are or can. The first requisite, then, for humility is a right knowledge of self. But self-knowledge shows us that, regarded in the light of our origin, we are mere creatures, and that as such we may not claim the credit of excellence whether in the natural or the supernatural order, and may ascribe nothing to ourselves except our sins. Thence follows that we must think very humbly of ourselves, must ascribe nothing to our own powers, and be proud of nothing; that, on the contrary, the best thing we can do is to be silent and efface ourselves, and even draw down contempt on ourselves by reason of our natural and supernatural defects, that others may not think better of us than we do ourselves. Humility is simply truth; and if Aloysius and other saints tried to appear contemptible, they only followed in this their self-knowledge, and in consequence acted truthfully.

From the consideration of the nature of humility we may infer its importance in the spiritual life. By means of true self-knowledge and its application to our lives we gain a right standpoint and enter into right relations to God and our surroundings. Without humility we are in a false position, and can neither see who we are nor what we owe to others; we give neither God nor our neighbour

---

[1] Bolland. 985 E. F. [2] Ib. 986 D.

his due. The effects of humility, then, are tranquillity, contentment, peace with God and men, and favour with both. God gives grace to the humble, but He resists the proud and withdraws His grace from them. But grace is the indispensable condition of all spiritual well-being. In this double sense humility is really the foundation of the spiritual life, and it is the easiest way and best preparation for even the hardest and loftiest ideals in the paths of virtue. Humility is love of God carried to the point of hatred of self, just as pride is self-love carried to the point of hatred of God.

10. The Pure Gold of Obedience.

Closely related to humility is obedience. Humility is in fact simply submission to God and to His representatives. Obedience makes us docile to the commands of superiors.

It is beyond all question that Aloysius never failed in obedience. He was naturally of so docile a disposition, and was so full of the Spirit of God, that he seemed to find no difficulty at all in the practice of this virtue. On the contrary, he obeyed even subordinate authority so readily and gladly, that everyone thought he could not be better pleased than by being given orders. The only occasions on which a slight trace of opposition might rise up in his soul were the refusals of his superiors to allow him to satisfy his eagerness for bodily penances. But he watched over himself with incredible severity, in order to subdue at once every such emotion. Thus he obeyed entirely, with body and soul, understanding, will, and affection. He rendered this obedience not only to the commands and wishes of his superiors, but also to the rules, which are also a subject for obedience, and, as it were, the printed commands of superiors. Neither he nor anyone else could remember his ever having committed the slightest

breach of rule. Every departure from the rules, even the slightest, seemed to him a very great evil, and no consideration for persons, however high their rank, could induce him to commit it. Some thought that he went even too far in this respect. Once, when he had paid a visit to Cardinal Della Rovere, the latter invited him to dine with him. Aloysius replied that this was against the rule, and took his leave. After this, whenever the Cardinal asked him to do anything, he invariably added the condition: "If it is not against the rule." One day the scholastic who shared his room ran short of paper whilst writing a letter, and asked Aloysius to give him a sheet. Aloysius did not know for the moment whether he might do so, so he immediately rose, went to ask permission, and then returned and gave his fellow-student the paper with the greatest readiness. Whoever can make sacrifices for 'obedience' sake, shows that he is in earnest in the pursuit of this virtue. Aloysius was certainly not in the habit of excusing himself; he was too humble for that. But once he thought it incumbent upon him to do so. One of the Fathers had told him that he acted against obedience in injuring his health by his penances. He answered quite calmly but yet decidedly, that he did no more than he had permission for; it was always permissible to present a request to superiors, and it rested with them to refuse or grant permission.

Aloysius' perfect obedience was prompted by the firm conviction that superiors stand to us in the place of God, and that God communicates His commands to us through them. So he saw in the wishes of his superiors only the Will of God. God, he said, does not command and exact our obedience directly and personally, but through his representatives; and as at Court everyone obeys the will of the Sovereign, be it made known by a Chamberlain or

by a common servant, so religious must respectfully and joyfully fulfil the Will of God, when it is communicated to them by superiors. For this reason Aloysius never considered the natural talents of a superior, and never asked the reason of an order. In this way, he thought, one could obey much more easily and cheerfully, acquire the virtue of real obedience, and also hope for a reward in heaven; but without this direction of our intention to God obedience would be simply common slavery. Superiors could not show more confidence in their subjects than by simply telling them, without giving any natural reasons, that such and such a thing was the Will of God, and they should do it out of love for Him. Aloysius also said that he had often perceived a special intervention of Providence on his behalf when fulfilling the commands of obedience; his superiors had often ordered him to do the very thing he had wished to ask permission for, but had not ventured, fearing to fail in obedience. Through obedience we can obtain all we wish from God.

This obedience, as practised by Aloysius, was surely beautiful and perfect. O that all who strive after perfection might give it the place in their esteem and their efforts that its importance in the spiritual life deserves!

There are two reasons why most people fail to acquire the virtue of perfect obedience. The first reason is that they do not esteem it sufficiently. Obedience is the most perfect of the vows, and the most meritorious sacrifice that can be offered to God. Its object is not an exterior possession or a bodily faculty of man, but his best and inmost self, his will and freedom of choice. He sacrifices them, and not directly to God, but for God's sake to a mere man who represents Him. Everyone must see from this what sublime virtues are included in the practice of obedience, especially self-denial, humility, and trust in God.

Nothing glorifies God more, and nothing unites a man more closely to God, than obedience; for by this virtue it is no longer self-will, but God's Will that guides him.

The second reason why many fail to attain to perfect obedience is, that they do not keep God in view, but pay too much attention to natural motives and to themselves. This endangers all merit and all perseverance in obedience. It lowers no one to submit to men for God's sake, but every one demeans himself when he obeys others for the sake of men. Whoever will obey only a learned, kind, strict, or generous superior, or will obey cheerfully only when he is told to do something pleasant, important, and full of honour for himself, has not the faintest conception of true obedience. God, Who is always our Master and always the same, wills that we should always obey in the same manner; for *He* is the Master, and He will not withhold from us the reward of our service.

11. The Lover of Poverty.

Even in the world Aloysius had loved poverty so much that he could hardly wait for the day on which the monastery, the home of poverty, was to become his home. How, then, could he help loving it, now that it had at last become his portion!

On one occasion Aloysius had, according to the custom of the Society of Jesus, to preach a sermon in the refectory before his assembled brethren. It happened to be the Feast of All Saints, and he thought he could not take a better subject than the praise of holy poverty. He began his sermon thus: "It is not without a deep and mystic reason that the first beatitude is: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' For this beatitude is, as it were, the foundation of the new City of God, which Christ wishes to teach us to build.

This beatitude, then, shall be the subject of our meditation, and we will endeavour to answer the two questions: First, why did Christ put this beatitude in the first place? Secondly, what are the motives that should lead us to embrace it?" In support of what he had first said, Aloysius cited a whole list of passages from the Fathers and sayings of Saints: Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine, Bonaventura, Francis of Assisi and Catherine of Sienna, all treating of the fundamental importance of poverty. In the second part of his discourse he extolled the results of poverty. "Whatever is good, useful, pleasant, or fitting, is all to be found in poverty of spirit; all this is so abundantly contained in this virtue, that there is nothing more useful, nothing more attractive and becoming than holy poverty." Among the advantages of poverty he lays special stress upon one only, viz., that it ensures heaven. "I appeal to St. Augustine; he says: 'Great is the happiness of Christians, for whom poverty is the price of heaven. Do you wish to know how precious poverty is? It purchases heaven. What other treasures have such value as is given to poverty?' Of what use would it be to us to have acquired a precious treasure or a large property in a far distant land, if we could not enter into possession of it or enjoy it? Poverty ensures us against this disappointment, by freeing us from all that might prevent us from arriving at our heavenly fatherland." Aloysius then went on to show that poverty is not only useful, but also pleasant and full of consolation, "not merely on account of the hope of eternal possessions, but even in the renunciation of the temporal goods that we forsake for love of Christ when we enter the Order". Thirdly and lastly, he said, poverty is honourable; first because it is pleasing to God, and secondly because Christ practised it. In conclusion he exclaimed with St. Gregory of Nazianzum: "Poverty is my riches; in poverty I glory, and am almost

tempted to be proud on account of it. When my enemies revile me on account of it, they appear to reproach me only for following in the footsteps of Him Who, being rich, became poor for our sakes. O that I could cast off even the miserable rags that clothe me, in order to be still less hindered by the thorns of this world, which try to ensnare and entangle all who are hastening to God!"[1]

In truth, Aloysius practised poverty in a very high degree. He would never have more than others, and abhorred anything that bore an appearance of private ownership. He had not even what others were accustomed to have, with the permission of their superiors; e. g. a watch, a writing-pad, a reliquary or other objects of devotion, and would not accept them even to give them away. Only two pictures — one of St. Catherine, the other of St. Thomas — adorned his prie-dieu; he would keep none in his breviary. Even when people asked permission of his superiors to give him objects of devotion, he either declined them or took them at once to the Rector.

It was his joy to possess nothing in the world and to be detached from everything. Whatever was given to him for his use in the way of clothes or furniture was always good enough, and he never declined it, least of all when it was shabby and worn. In conformity to the rule, he never expected anything but the worst of everything in the house. He used to say that this was only as it should be; when a poor man went to beg at a wealthy house, he could not expect to have the best things given him, but only what was worn and cast-off. God repeatedly per-

[1] Compare the whole sermon in *Cepari*, Edition of 1862 (Appendix), p. 455 ff. An interesting peculiarity of this sermon is that it consists almost entirely of quotations from the Saints, connected by short interpolations of his own, thus showing how wide and thorough the range of his reading had been.

mitted this desire of Aloysius for privation to be granted. One of his fellow-students relates that, when Aloysius fell ill, he had to yield him his place in the infirmary and go instead to the room that at his own request had been allotted to Aloysius. But how astonished the scholastic was when he entered the room! It was only eight feet square, and so low that he could touch the ceiling with his hand; it had no proper window, and contained nothing but a miserable bed with one blanket, and a little writing-table, on which lay a Bible. This student, so he tells us, had formerly had an opportunity of seeing the Castle of Castiglione and the luxury that Aloysius had renounced, and therefore it is not surprising that he now acquired a very high idea of the Saint's love of poverty [1]. Aloysius regarded himself as a poor man who had been received into the house out of charity, and therefore considered everything good and comfortable, even too good and comfortable for him [2].

His poverty was great, even in the Society, where all are poor; it was venerable, because voluntary, chosen and practised from the noblest and loftiest motives, out of love for our Saviour, His poverty and His kingdom; it was a rich poverty, for it gave good example and enriched him with countless merits; it fitted him for everything good and great, and flooded his soul with the sweetness of purest consolation. God Himself had become the rich heritage of Aloysius' poverty.

12. The Master in Mortification.

Mortification is in reality simply the moral strength that we must exercise in order to be and to do what we ought to be and to do. This mortification must embrace

[1] Bolland. 985 F. 989 E. [2] Ib. 988 C.

both the outer and the inner man, and is therefore of two kinds — exterior and interior. Interior mortification is directed to the government of the inner faculties of man; exterior, to the government of the senses. The aim and end of mortification is to prevent or remove all irregular emotions and attachments that might hinder us in fulfilling the commandments of God and the duties of our state. In its perfection, it even makes these commandments and duties light and easy to us, by destroying or at least continually weakening our bad inclinations, through long practice in overcoming them.

Aloysius found no difficulty in interior mortification. By constant practice he had attained to such perfection in it that he enjoyed unbroken peace of soul; and not only had he no more resistance on the part of his passions to overcome, but he even found in them most willing and powerful instruments for the service of God. No one ever saw him give way to anger, annoyance, or levity. If he found that he had committed a fault, he was not unduly disquieted, but humbled himself before God and resolved to acknowledge and repair it in confession. Whoever takes his faults too much to heart, he said, does not know himself, does not recognize how feeble we are, but simply gives way to self-love. He was especially careful to watch over the origin of his thoughts and wishes, in order to nip in the bud every imperfection. In confession he was concise, clear, definite, without any scrupulous disquietude; for by the interior light that God gave him he saw himself as in a mirror, just as he really was. He loved to be reproved by his superiors in the presence of others, and even tried to bring this about, until he noticed that it caused him to be esteemed, and then he immediately ceased to do so.

His love of exterior mortification was insatiable to the last. He denied himself, as far as he could, any rest or

enjoyment, and tormented his body with all sorts of discomforts and penitential practices. If obedience had not bridled his zeal, he would certainly have shortened his life still more than he had already done by his former austerities. If his superiors refused his requests for bodily penances, he tried to make up for the lack of them in some other way, for example by visiting the church, imposing upon himself interior mortifications, or asking leave to give an address in some language with which he was not fully conversant. His motives in acting thus were made known by himself in a conversation with his companions, who often remonstrated with him about his too great eagerness for bodily penances. One of them remarked that he could not help wondering how Aloysius could reconcile it with his conscience to tease his superiors so often with such requests. He replied that he knew very well his want of strength, and that on this account he left it to his superiors to decide about wishes of this kind; that he had sometimes thought something would not be permitted, and yet his superiors had granted him leave for it; it was surely the least one could do to offer to God the desire in place of the deed. Sometimes he made such requests simply with the intention of humbling himself and appearing to be wanting in prudence and right judgment [1]. Another of his companions once said to him that he could not understand how, being so prudent and sensible in other things, he could go against the advice and opinion of so many old and learned Fathers, in crucifying his flesh to such an extent. Aloysius was at no loss for a reply. Two classes of people, he said, gave him this advice: those who did not follow it themselves, and those who did; and he preferred to imitate the example

[1] Bolland. 990 D. 1023 E.

of the former. He compared himself to a crooked piece of iron, which has to be hammered straight, and said that, while one is young, it is well to do as much as possible in this respect, since age will soon put an end to it. It was true that interior mortification is of more value than exterior, but one should practise the one and not neglect the other. Thus the Saints and Founders of religious Orders had done; they had needed rather the bridle than the spur. With regard to a still more serious observation made to him, viz. that he would repent on his death-bed of having treated himself so mercilessly, and have to do penance for it in Purgatory, Aloysius gave a solemn answer on another occasion. It may be seen from all this how deep and solid were the motives that prompted his zeal for mortification.

There has never yet been a Saint who confined himself to the practice of exterior penance; and had there been one, he would have been no better than an Indian fakir. But neither has there ever been a Saint who practised only interior penance; he would have been a living miracle, never seen before. Unhappily our age will hear but little of mortification, especially exterior. On account of weak health, excess of work and other exterior trials, people think themselves now-a-days exempt from bodily penance. It is true that we have not the strength of our forefathers, and that interior mortification is of more importance, but it does not follow from this that one may altogether neglect the mortification of the senses; everyone must do what his conscience tells him his strength is equal to, or what a prudent director permits. To give up altogether the practice of bodily penance is not the Christian spirit, but a purely natural one — the spirit of pride, sensuality and indolence. We can no more rid ourselves of our passions than we can run away from our shadow. A large pro-

St. Aloysius in Religion.

portion of our difficulties in the spiritual life comes from the flesh, which lusts against the spirit. Innocent souls are strong in the practice of bodily penance, out of love of God and for their own spiritual profit. Love and joy are nourished only by sacrifice. But whoever has sinned much, has still more need to be zealous in mortification, in order to regain his lost strength and freedom, and to offer the sacrifice of expiation. Sacrifice is all-powerful with God; it repairs all harm, since Our Lord has made peace through the Blood of His Cross (Coloss. i. 20).

13. The Summit of Perfection — Love.

It may easily be imagined how great the love of St. Aloysius must have been, since God so graciously desires to impart Himself to creatures, and the Saint so generously overcame all hindrances to this union and prepared his heart for it so well. Naturally there was now no more question of what may be called the drudgery of love — of detachment from creatures, avoidance of sin, of ready fulfilment of the Will of God; not even of suffering, which is one of the chief means of acquiring love. Aloysius had already passed these stages; and we shall here only speak of the last flight of his love, and of his happy repose in the Bosom of his greatest Good.

His love of God showed itself above all in his untiring practice of prayer. Besides making the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius every year, according to custom — a time of great graces received in intimate communion with God — Rome afforded him manifold opportunities for prayer and every pious practice. When he walked out he visited now this and now that church or sanctuary, venerated the relics of the Saints, and could scarcely be persuaded to leave them. He went especially often to visit the picture of the Madonna della Strada in the Church of the Gesù. He had

a tender devotion to Our Lady, whom he lovingly called his Mother and Mistress and daily honoured by the recital of the Rosary. Not only in prayer but at other times also he constantly remembered the Presence of God, and offered all his actions to Him in purest love. Sometimes he was so rapt in God that he did not notice when he was greeted by someone who passed him, and thus incurred many a rebuke, although as a rule he was very attentive and returned every greeting with great cordiality. His usually pale face was often seen to glow when he spoke or heard others speak of God. Lastly, he showed his love of God in his conversations during recreation, which turned entirely upon God and things spiritual. If anything else was being discussed, he soon contrived to introduce a spiritual topic, and continued it as long as the conversation lasted. It was this constant and intimate union with God that consumed his strength and shortened his young life, and this caused his superiors to restrict his time for prayer.

Closely akin to love of God is the love of our neighbour. Both form one and the same virtue, with two objects, but with the same motive, which is no other than God Himself. Aloysius was as full of tender charity towards his neighbour as he was severe to himself. He had obtained permission to visit the infirmary of the College every day, in order to console and cheer his sick brethren. If his headaches prevented him from studying, he went to offer his services to the infirmarian, and performed all the duties allotted to him with the greatest amiability and kindness. In his intercourse with others he was exceedingly frank, sincere and candid. "Yes" and "no" meant with him exactly what they expressed. He said that duplicity, exaggeration, and equivocation were the pest of simplicity, and incompatible with the religious spirit.

Aloysius was still more eager in his endeavours to be of use to the souls of his fellow-men. He burned with longing to be sent on the missions to the heathen; but as he had not yet even received the higher orders, he tried in his own way to make himself useful for the spiritual good of others. It was his joy to expound the Catechism to the servants of the Roman College, and also on the Campo di Fiore and the Piazza Montanara, where there were always a great many countryfolk from the mountains and the Campagna. There he would mount the first platform he found unoccupied — on which, perhaps, a quack or a juggler had just been plying his trade — and propounded a lesson in Christian doctrine to the people who gathered round him. Cardinal di Cusa was one day driving through the Piazza, and could not understand why such a crowd had assembled round one of these platforms, until, on making inquiries, he was told that Brother Gonzaga was preaching there. Not one of the catechists brought so many penitent sinners to confession as he; and his tact in dealing with people was so well known at this time that many Fathers who held high offices in the Society — among others Fr. Vitelleschi, who afterwards became Father General — entertained the hope that God would one day entrust to him the direction of the Society. On this account his companions often called him in jest "The Little General" [1].

Aloysius had especially at heart the spiritual progress of his own fellow-students, and he tried to promote it in particular by spiritual conversation. He had obtained permission from the Father Rector to gather a few companions round him at certain hours on free days. With these he conversed solely on spiritual topics, to the exclusion of

[1] *Schröder*, Life of St. Aloysius 324, 399.

all others, however justifiable. If he joined a circle of his younger companions, or of those with whom he was more intimate, he at once introduced a spiritual subject. If priests or others who stood above him were present, he sought to attain his object by putting questions to them on such themes. All readily complied with his wishes in this respect, in order to please him. When a younger student who had just left the noviciate entered the College, Aloysius made friends with him and tried to keep up the fervour he had brought from the noviciate, offering him his own help and pointing out others who might be of assistance to him in this respect. If Aloysius noticed that anyone seemed to have slackened in fervour, he would seek his society for a time and try to exert a good influence over him. As soon, however, as he noticed that his intercourse had done good to his companion, he left him to himself again; for he thought that in a religious Order one ought not to attach oneself to anyone in particular without some special reason, but should hold intercourse with all, without distinction. He well understood how to suit himself to his company, and to combine true cheerfulness with religious gravity.

It is astonishing what splendid results Aloysius obtained from his efforts, and what a good spirit he awakened in his companions. An eye-witness relates that there were at this time more than two hundred scholastics of the Society in the Roman College, who all, according to custom, walked up and down in small parties in the garden or in the corridors of the house during recreation after dinner; and we may be sure that there was not one of these parties where the conversation did not turn on a spiritual topic. This was especially the case when they went to the villa at Frascati for the holidays. There they would come together in woods and shady spots, in order to

converse about what they had been reading or meditating on. Aloysius might well rejoice and thank God; for this excellent spirit was his work, helped by the grace of God.

Thus it is with the love of God. If it truly rules in a man's heart, such a one is anxious to win the whole world to this love. It embraces God not only in Himself, but also in our fellow-men, or rather it embraces our fellow-men in God, as St. John says: "He that loveth not his brother, whom he seeth, how can he love God Whom he seeth not?" (1. John iv, 20.) Spiritual conversation is an excellent practice of this love of God and our neighbour. It is a sure sign that our heart is full of God; and it is also a fruitful means of helping our neighbour in the spiritual life, and yet so easy, that anyone can make use of it anywhere. Who, then, would not wish to do so? "Religion clean and undefiled before God and the Father is this: To visit the fatherless and widows in their tribulation; and to keep one's self unspotted from this world" (James i. 27).

14. The Dove with the Olive-branch.

(Castiglione and Mantua 1589.)

Aloysius had now been two years in the Roman College, and was about to enter upon the third year of his theological course.

In the month of September 1589, while he was spending the holidays with his fellow-students at the villa at Frascati, in the Albanian hills, Fr. Robert Bellarmine arrived one day from Rome with a message from the Father General, to the effect that Aloysius was to return at once to the city and thence go on to visit his family at Castiglione.

The circumstances which occasioned this order were as follows. Aloysius had two paternal uncles; Alphonsus, Marquis of Castel Goffredo, and Horace, Lord of Solferino.

The latter had just died at Mantua, and had named in his will Vincent, Duke of Mantua, as his heir; although the seigniory of Solferino, being an imperial fief, devolved by right upon the Marquis Rudolph, Aloysius' brother and successor. At the first news of his uncle's death Rudolph, with 300 retainers, had taken possession of the Castle of Solferino. The Duke of Mantua, on his part, relied upon the will, and likewise put a force of armed men into the field. Fortunately no bloody encounter had as yet taken place, and the contending parties agreed to let the Emperor decide the dispute. Donna Martha, the mother of Aloysius and Rudolph, therefore journeyed to the Court at Prague, accompanied by her three youngest sons. On this occasion the eldest of the three, Francis, a boy of nine or ten years, recited an address to the Emperor with such grace that the monarch at once took a fancy to the little orator, and kept him at Court as his page. An imperial commissioner was sent to act as steward of Solferino in the Emperor's name, until the final decision should be made. At last the affair was settled, and the decision given in favour of Rudolph; and here the matter would have ended, but for the uncalled-for interference of malicious tongues whose tale-bearing and instigation so confused the issue that the dispute about Solferino was in the end the least part of the discord. Even the Archduke Ferdinand, uncle of the Emperor Rudolph, tried in vain to restore peace between the two princes. It then occurred to Eleanor, the Dowager Duchess of Mantua, and to Donna Martha of Castiglione, that no one was more likely to succeed in pacifying them than Aloysius, to whom Duke Vincent had always been much attached, and who also had the most influence over Rudolph. So Donna Martha wrote to Fr. Acquaviva on the subject. Aloysius had known of this sad affair a year before. On the 28th of December 1588 he had written to

his mother on the eve of her departure for Prague, as follows:

"A few days ago I received the letter from your Ladyship, telling me the answer of the Duke of Mantua about the Castle of Solferino. This answer gives you an opportunity of exercising your motherly love and solicitude, and at the same time imposes upon me the duty of begging the Divine Majesty to bring this matter to such an end as He knows to be the best, and to bless your own efforts in it. Since you have as your guide on this journey Our Lady, who to-day — on the Feast of the Holy Innocents — fled into Egypt, it seems to me that you scarcely need any other consolation than to contemplate this your guide. For this is the reason why Our Saviour and His Blessed Mother chose to pass through the waters of tribulation, that these waters so bitter to their taste might be sweetened for us. I am fairly well, thank God, and now that Christmas, the true season of prayer, has come, I will remember your Ladyship doubly in my devotions, and beg you to do the same for me, who need it so much. By the goodness of God I stand in need of nothing else; and in conclusion, I commend you to Him." [1]

Now that his mother had written to the General, he saw that he himself was to be drawn into the matter, and nothing could have been less in accordance with his wishes. He redoubled his prayers and consulted his confessor, Fr. Robert Bellarmine, who gave his decision in the following words: "Aloysius, go; I consider that it is for the service of God, which you ought not to neglect." At these words Aloysius was satisfied, and decided to await in perfect indifference the decision of his superiors, assured that it would be for the best. And at length, at the repeated

[1] *Fossi*, Lettere di S. L. G. 32 f.

and urgent request of the Archduke Ferdinand, they gave the order for him to start on the journey, which he did after a quarter-of-an-hour's preparation.

Before leaving Rome, he went to pay a visit to Cardinal Della Rovere, and whilst there he had a slight fainting-fit. The Cardinal took this opportunity to exhort him to take better care of his health, but Aloysius replied that he already took more care of it than he ought. His superiors gave him as travelling-companion a very good and prudent lay-brother, James Borlasca, who was to watch over his health and have full authority over him in this respect. In the morning, when they were about to start, the Brother brought Aloysius a pair of riding-boots, remarking that they had once belonged to some great personage. Aloysius at once began to examine them — quite against his custom — to see if he could not find some excuse for not putting them on, thinking they had been given to him on account of his own noble extraction. The Brother guessed at once what was the matter, took them away and brought a pair that suited Aloysius at once. But it was exactly the same pair of boots; the Brother had merely bent them in here and there to make them look different. Several venerable Fathers wished to force the Saint to accept an umbrella, on account of his constant headaches; but he could not be persuaded to take one.

On the 12th of September 1589 he set off with his companion, accompanied also by Fr. Bernardine Medici, who was going to Milan to teach Holy Scripture. On the journey he observed his accustomed devotions, and it was remarkable to see how devoutly the coachmen listened to his pious conversation and venerated him as a Saint. In Sienna, where he stayed in the house of the Society, he declined all the honours and unusual attentions that the Fathers wished to show him, thinking that they did this out of

respect for his former position. He was pleased to be again in Florence, the cradle of his sanctity, after so long an absence. Many changes had taken place since he had been there. The Grand Duke Francis and his second wife Biancha Capello had died within a short time of each other, and Cardinal Ferdinand Medici, whom Aloysius had visited on his first arrival in Rome, had succeeded his brother in the government, by permission of the Pope. Aloysius left his companion Fr. Medici here with his princely relatives, and proceeded at once to Bologna, where he lodged at the College of the Society. Scarcely had he entered the house when he was deep in conversation upon spiritual things with the inmates. He remained there only one day. The Rector of the College sent the Brother Sacristan, John Angelo, into the city with Aloysius, to show him the noteworthy sights, of which there were many in "fat and learned" Bologna. But Aloysius would only visit a few of the principal churches, and having thus satisfied his devotion returned to the College. In the territory of Ferrara, between Mantua and Bologna, he arrived one night at an inn where the landlord would only give him and his companion *one* bed between them, saying that he must reserve the other beds in case any gentlemen might come. The lay-brother grew somewhat angry, and asked if the landlord took them for beggars. But Aloysius quieted him, saying that they could not take the man's opinion amiss, seeing that they really were poor. However, as no more distinguished guests arrived, they did get a bed each, after all.

In Mantua Aloysius at once went to present himself to the Dowager Duchess Eleanor, who had become a widow by the death of Duke William (August 14th 1587), and conversed with her for some time. She was overjoyed to see him again. Before calling upon her he had already written to his brother Rudolph as follows:

"Pax Christi! By the grace of God I have arrived in Mantua, and am, together with the Brother who accompanies me, enjoying the hospitality of our Fathers in their College here. If possible I will present myself to-day, and endeavour by God's assistance to bring this business to an end as speedily as may be. I have placed it, before all, in the Sacred Hands of Our Lord and Saviour, Who, I trust, will bring the matter to a favourable issue. Towards evening my companion and myself will arrive at Castiglione, there to spend the night. So I conclude, asking you to present my respects to her Excellency the Marchioness, our mother, whose hands I kiss." [1]

On receiving this news Rudolph immediately sent a carriage to bring his brother to Castiglione. As they drew near the town, Aloysius sent a man who chanced to meet them to tell the Marquis that he was there with two companions, the lay-brother and Fr. Antony Giunio, who was going to Brescia. The messenger naturally lost no time in spreading the news through all Castiglione, so that when the carriage drove into the town all thes treets were crowded with people, and curious onlookers stood at all the doors and windows. The joy was universal; a salute of artillery was fired, the bells were rung, and the good people tried in every possible way to show their delight and their veneration for Aloysius, who stood covered with shame and confusion at the honours paid to him.

At the foot of the hill on which the Castle stood he was met by Rudolph. As soon as Aloysius left the carriage, a vassal who had committed some fault and expected to be punished by the Marquis knelt at his feet, trusting to obtain pardon on the occasion of his elder brother's visit. The Marquis immediately granted his request.

---

[1] *Fozzi*, Lettere di S. L. G. 36.

So Aloysius was again in Castiglione, the scene of his pious childhood and holy youth. He saw again the rooms in which he had lived, prayed, done penance, and won his vocation at such a cost. Nearly four years had elapsed since he left Castiglione, and how much had changed since then! His father was dead, and lay buried in the Franciscan vault at Mantua. The circle of his brothers and sisters, too, had grown smaller; his little sister, Isabella, had died at Madrid, and Francis was far away at the Court of Prague. But what must have surprised and pained Aloysius most on his arrival was to find that his mother, to whom he had sent a greeting through Rudolph that very morning, was not at the Castle at all. For good reasons which will be mentioned later she had quitted it, and occupied a palace in the town. And at the moment she was twelve miles away from Castiglione, in San Martino. However, at the news of Aloysius' arrival she hastened back at once with her two little sons, and received her beloved son in her own palace the very next day. But she did not greet him as a mother usually does, with kisses and embraces; she received him on her knees, reverently bowing her head to the ground, as to a Saint. Aloysius passed the whole day in conversation with her. At first his travelling-companion was present; but, judging rightly that the mother could not speak freely of family affairs in his presence, the Brother took the first opportunity to retire. On returning after some time had elapsed, he found both mother and son on their knees in prayer. In the evening Aloysius asked the Brother why he had gone away. The latter replied that he thought their superiors would wish Aloysius to be able to converse unrestrainedly with his mother about family affairs, seeing that they had sent him so far for this very purpose; but that, if other ladies came to visit him, he would take care to be present. With this Aloysius was satisfied.

He stayed at Castiglione for several days, in order to obtain from Rudolph and his mother a full explanation with regard to all points of the dispute between him and the Duke of Mantua. During these few days he set a most magnificent example of virtue. When he went out, he would never make use of the carriage placed at his disposal by the Marquis, though the coachman had orders to follow him everywhere. He carried his biretta in his hand, in order to return the continual salutations from all sides. It was most unpleasant and embarrassing to him to hear the retainers of the Castle call him "Your Excellency" or "Most Illustrious", as formerly. He would not be waited upon by anyone, not even permitting his companion to render him a service unless it was absolutely necessary; and even then he never asked for help, but waited for God to inspire someone to assist him. If his superiors had permitted it, he would have stayed with the Archpriest in the town, instead of with his mother or brother!

During his stay at Castiglione the season was advancing, and the summer clothing he had brought with him was no longer sufficient as the weather grew cooler. But Aloysius would accept nothing from his mother; he wrote to Fr. Lorenzo Terzi, the Rector of the Jesuit College at Brescia, asking him to send him some old winter clothes. His mother vainly begged him to accept at least two Mantuan vests for himself and his companion, and some linen that she herself had made for him; he would not consent, until at last the lay-brother bade him accept them as an alms, and wear them. He lived in his paternal mansion as modestly and retiringly as though he were a poor stranger. When he had business with the Marquis, he always had himself announced and waited like others in the ante-room. When at table in the Castle he allowed himself to be served like the rest; but when alone with

his mother he would not have his glass handed to him on a silver tray. He wished to have things as much as possible as if in the monastery. If his mother offered him anything particularly good and appetising, he thanked her pleasantly and took it, but left it untouched. "Oh", he said to his companion, "how much better it is to be in our own houses; our simple fare suits me far better than all the dishes that appear on the table here." He never knew what he had been eating or drinking, for he had lost all sense of taste. He did everything for himself, and would not even suffer the Brother to help him fasten the bandage of the seton which, as recommended by the physicians of that day, he kept on his left arm. He made his own bed, and enjoyed helping the Brother to make his, until the servants noticed it and hastened to forestall him. Forgetful as he was of himself, he was full of solicitude for the Brother's wants. Every morning he made an hour's meditation, heard Mass and recited his Breviary, after which he said the Rosary aloud with the Brother. Whenever he could he retired to spend some time in prayer, and reserved three hours every evening for this purpose. He ended the day with the Litany of the Saints and an examination of conscience. His mother had the joy of conversing with him most frequently of all, because she was more pious and in greatest need of his consolation. On Sundays and feast-days, when he received Holy Communion, everyone hastened to see him and be edified by his devotion. On the first Sunday after his arrival the church was so full of people that he thought of giving them a short address; however, he decided not to do so yet, as he wished to ensure that the Court itself should first give them a good example.

The business Aloysius had come to despatch necessitated his making several journeys, to Brescia, Mantua, and else-

where. One day he was obliged to go to Castel Goffredo, to see his uncle Alphonsus. The Marquis gave him some retainers as escort, but Aloysius dismissed them as soon as he was out of Castiglione. The coachman lost his way, and Aloysius did not arrive at his destination until late in the evening. The gates of the fortress were closed, and there ensued a long delay and considerable parley with the sentinels as to the names and business of the visitors.

At last the gates were opened and the drawbridge lowered, and a long line of soldiers, noblemen, and servants, all bearing lighted torches, appeared to conduct Aloysius into the Castle, where his uncle received him with every mark of cordial affection and joy. He and his companion were soon shown to apartments prepared for them with princely magnificence. Scarcely were they alone when Aloysius exclaimed to the Brother: "Oh, my dear Brother! God help us! What have we come to this evening, on account of our sins! Just look what rooms, what beds! How much better we should sleep in our beloved cells, in our own poor beds, without these honours and luxuries!" All these marks of respect and honour shown to him made him feel ill at ease in his uncle's house, and he would not stay an hour longer than his business imperatively demanded. On the very next day after his arrival he took his leave with a sense of relief, and as he had obtained sufficient information about the matters in question while at Castiglione, he started at once for Mantua, there to confer with the Duke. During his stay here he lodged at the College of the Society, which had as its Rector at this time Fr. Prosper Malavolta, who had been received into the Society by St. Ignatius himself, and knew from personal intercourse the spirit of this great Saint. He had now an opportunity of seeing another Saint, and acquired a very high opinion of the great virtue of his

young confrère. It may be regarded as a token of this high esteem that he bade Aloysius give a spiritual instruction to the assembled members of the College, although the Saint was not yet a priest, and it was not customary to entrust this duty to anyone but the Superior and other old and experienced Fathers. The other members of the house also vied with one another for a long time afterwards in praising the magnificent example of sanctity, especially the great humility, modesty, gravity and amiability by which Aloysius edified them in every word and deed, always behaving as though he saw God visibly present. They said St. Charles Borromeo seemed to live again in Aloysius; as a matter of fact he is said to have resembled him in his features.

At last Aloysius began to take the necessary steps to complete the business on which he had come, and was supported in this by the advice and help of Don Prosper and Don Fabius Gonzaga, a cousin of the Duke [1]. But a considerable time elapsed before he could succeed in gaining audience of the Duke.

"I send the messenger", he writes to his mother, who was impatiently awaiting news, "because I see that there is no prospect yet of obtaining audience of the Duke; since, although in his own State, he is continually travelling to and fro between Mantua and Marmirolo. Don Fabius assured me the day before yesterday that he did not think the Duke had yet had a single free hour in which to give me a quiet hearing such as the importance of my business demands, and as the Duke himself had promised. I do not fail to take every care that the matter seems to me to exact; I have Don Fabius as procurator and Don Prosper as solicitor. But I dare not venture to urge and

[1] *Fozzi*, Lettere di S. L. G. 37. *Rittershusii* Duces Mantuae.

hurry them more than I have done already, for I do not wish to run the risk of being admonished to have patience by seculars, to whom I ought to preach it myself on account of my state. I make this known to your Excellency and beg you also to inform Don Alphonsus of it, in order that he may no longer be in uncertainty as to the cause of my delay. As soon as I have obtained an audience, I will let you and my uncle know." [1]

It was certainly not a pleasant or easy task that Aloysius had to perform, and although he had powerful supporters, he nevertheless took care above all to commend the matter to God, and to consider in the presence of His Divine Majesty the ways and means to attain his end. During the course of the dispute the Marquis Rudolph had let fall many an incautious remark, which malicious tongues had repeated to the Duke; and on the other hand, these very same people had done their best to lull Rudolph into a false sense of security and make him careless. Thus the Duke had grown exceedingly angry, whilst the Marquis made no attempt to quit the defiant position he had taken up and make overtures of peace. Under these circumstances a personal interview with the Duke was necessarily a very difficult matter to manage. At last, at the beginning of November, Aloysius was told that the Duke was ready to receive him. The audience lasted an hour and a half, and had a result as unhoped-for as it was happy. It seems that Aloysius first appealed to the princely magnanimity of the Duke, and begged him on his knees to be reconciled to his brother Rudolph for the love of Jesus. If the Duke would only do this, he said, everything could easily be arranged, for his family had never intended to do him any wrong, but had only thought to defend what they

[1] *Fozzi*, Lettere di S. L. G. 37 f.

believed to be their rights. But this unhappy dispute had set them at variance, and yet they would rather yield Solferino than lose the friendship and affection of the Duke. These affectionate and humble words softened the Duke's heart at once; he was so touched that he kissed and embraced Aloysius, heartily forgave Rudolph, and promised to do whatever Aloysius thought best in the matter, telling him that he left it entirely in his hands. Aloysius had accomplished more in an hour and a half than many others of their princely relatives had been able to do in months. Some distinguished persons sought on this account to persuade the Duke not to yield at once, but to wait at least a short time for appearance' sake, lest the princes who had already endeavoured to act as mediators should be offended that Aloysius, who was only acting as his brother's advocate, should have been more successful than they who were quite disinterested. But the Duke replied that, if he had yielded, he had done so solely for Aloysius' sake, and he wished it to be known by everyone. Aloysius now had a list of the complaints against Rudolph drawn up in writing, and obtained from his brother an explanation with regard to each. Rudolph's answers completely satisfied the Duke, so Aloysius himself presented his brother to him. The Duke was very gracious and friendly, and kept Rudolph with him the whole day. Aloysius was also invited to dine with them, but he declined, and returned to take his meal at the College. The Duke urged him at least to be present at the play to be acted in the afternoon, but Aloysius smilingly excused himself on the plea that his companion, the lay-brother, was no friend of comedies. The whole matter ended by a complete renunciation on the part of the Duke of all claim to Solferino [1].

---

[1] Bolland. 1000 C. E. F.

Aloysius sought with his usual humility to ascribe this happy termination, after God, to the efforts of his friends. Thus he writes to Fabius Gonzaga:

"Thanks be to the Lord our God, Who in His eternal love and mercy has vouchsafed to bring this long and complicated business to a happy end, through the intervention of your Excellency. You have thus not only restored peace to our house, but have also gained great merit in God's sight. I have received this grace from His Hands, and I beg of Him to grant you an eternal reward for it in heaven, and to fill you even here below with His Divine consolation as a pledge of eternal blessings."[1]

15. A Painful Task.

Now that his task was so happily ended, Aloysius might have been able to return at once to the longed-for peace of his cell in the house of the Society, had he not been detained by another still more important family affair.

On his arrival at the Castle of Castiglione he had found in place of his mother another lady, young and beautiful, who appeared to be the mistress of the house. This was Helena Aliprandi, the daughter of John Antony Aliprandi, a member of a noble Lombard family[2], who acted as Master of the Mint to the Marquis, and was therefore his vassal. How she had come to the Castle, no one seemed to know; but her mere presence there gave rise to the worst possible suspicions, and was a public scandal. In the previous year, 1588, his mother must have complained in one of her letters to Aloysius of Rudolph's intercourse with the daughter of Aliprandi, for he replied as follows:

---

[1] *Fossi*, Lettere di S. L. G. 42.

[2] *Maineri*, Vita di S. Luigi Gonzaga 153.

"With regard to the other matter concerning Rudolph of which you tell me, it seems to me that the best remedy is the one instituted on earth by Christ our Lord, namely marriage. I think you would do well to counsel it to my brother; and if you deem it necessary, Cardinal Della Rovere and I will also advise him to take this step, for we both think it would be good for Rudolph. I have no particular match in view, unless perhaps a daughter of Count Troilus di S. Secondo; but I hear that negotiations are pending for a marriage between her and a brother of one of the Cardinals of this Court, who is a great friend of Mgr. Della Rovere. I think we should not interrupt these negotiations, as they have already begun, but await the result of them; for his Lordship the Cardinal Della Rovere told me that he thought the lady herself would cause them to be broken off, as she is from the north, and does not wish to marry into this part of the country. This last circumstance seems to me to be in favour of my brother, the Marquis. Your Excellency will be able to obtain better information about all this where you are, and also to see if this match would be agreeable to the Duke of Mantua" etc....[1]

It is at first sight not a little strange to see a religious who so shunned mundane affairs suddenly concern himself at such length with matrimonial schemes, seek a bride for his brother, discuss ways and means, and give advice as to the steps necessary to ensure a successful issue. This departure from his usual habits plainly shows that Aloysius saw in this matter something more than a mere mundane and family affair. His object was to put a stop to an offence against God and a grave scandal, and to bring about the conversion of his brother.

---

[1] Letter dated Rome, June 20th 1588. *Fozzi*, Lettere di S. L. G. 30 f.

After the year 1588 there is no mention of the subject in his letters; but Rudolph's relations to the young lady were assuming a more and more serious character, until at last the old Marchioness quitted the Castle with her two youngest children, leaving the stranger in possession.

One can imagine what a grief it must have been to Aloysius to find such a state of affairs in his paternal home, and how deep was the shame that made him refrain from giving an address to the people, under such circumstances. This matter had to be set right. As soon, then, as the affair with the Duke of Mantua had been settled, Aloysius spoke very seriously to his brother about Helen, and insisted that he should either marry or dismiss her. Rudolph listened patiently to all he said, but always put him off with fair words. Rightly thinking that matters would remain as they were if nothing was settled before his departure, Aloysius pressed him until he promised on oath to come to Milan very soon and put everything in order as his brother wished. Somewhat relieved by this promise, Aloysius left Castiglione on the 25th of November 1589, and went to Milan, where he was to resume his theological studies. A few weeks later Rudolph actually came, and had himself announced at the College. Aloysius was making his thanksgiving after Holy Communion, when the porter came to inform him that his brother had arrived and was waiting for him at the door. But he would not interrupt his devotions, which he continued for fully two hours longer before going to see his brother. To his surprise and joy he now learned from Rudolph exactly how things stood. A year before Aloysius' arrival at Castiglione Rudolph had been legally and validly married to Helen, although the deepest secrecy had been preserved with regard to the ceremony. Even his own mother knew nothing of this marriage; it was known only to the young couple themselves, the Bishop,

their parish priest of the Church of St. Celsus and Nazarius, and the necessary witnesses. The Bishop had given a dispensation from the publishing of the banns (Oct. 25th 1588). Rudolph's reason for this unfortunate secrecy was his fear lest his noble relatives — especially his uncle, Don Alphonsus of Castel Goffredo — might be displeased at the match; the former on account of his bride's inferiority of birth, his uncle for another reason. Don Alphonsus had an only daughter, named Catherine, whom he wished to give in marriage to Rudolph; in fact, he had already obtained the necessary dispensation from the Pope. If Rudolph married another lady, it was to be feared that his uncle would be angry and deprive him of Castel Goffredo, which he would otherwise have inherited. Thus human respect and shortsighted calculations had here, as so often happens, been the cause of much grief and great scandal.

Aloysius rejoiced with all his heart to hear that his brother was innocent before God in the principal part of the matter; but still he told him that he was bound by his princely word to do what he (Aloysius) would decide after having consulted some learned and experienced Fathers, with regard to any further concealment. Rudolph agreed to this, and returned to Castiglione with a lighter heart. Aloysius, on his part, wrote and laid the case before the ecclesiastical authorities in Rome, and also consulted a few of the Fathers in Milan. He was not surprised to receive from all sides the unanimous answer that it was not permissible to conceal the marriage any longer.

His next duty was to induce his brother to take the difficult step he so much dreaded, and make his marriage public. Aloysius realised to the full the difficulty of his task, and wrote the following letter which, more than any other, affords us a glimpse of his heart. He had told the

messenger by word of mouth on what grounds the decision had been given, and addressed to his brother in person these words:

"I thank your Excellency for sending me the messenger[1]. I have fully explained to him how, according to the judgment and opinion of competent persons and among them the one whom you consulted here in Milan, I feel *in Domino* (before God) that you are bound in conscience and under pain of mortal sin to act. Nothing, then, remains for me to say to your Excellency, but to beg and entreat you for the love of God, of the Heart of Jesus Christ, and of the Blessed Virgin, not to disappoint me in the hopes which I have up to the present entertained of your Excellency, and in which you have confirmed me by your oath, but to carry out one of the two plans which I have explained to the Archpriest. If you do this, I shall rejoice to have you as a brother in Christ; and, as I have always assisted you and have always been desirous of rendering you service, I will also in the future never fail to help you. I would willingly risk my life for your salvation, had I the opportunity. This desire for your welfare urged me to leave Rome and spend this winter in Lombardy, to the great detriment of my studies; but I shall esteem all this as little if thereby *acquiram Christo te fratrem in illo carissimum* (I can win for Christ a brother so dear to me in Him). But if I do not succeed in this, I declare to you that I do not and will not recognize you as a brother merely according to the flesh, for as such I died to you more than four years ago. I should be greatly ashamed of myself if, after having forsaken all else and even myself also for the love of Christ, now out of natural affection

[1] In all probability this was the Archpriest of Castiglione, who had performed the marriage ceremony.

erubescerem Christum, I were to be ashamed of Him and make nothing of an offence against Him. For Christ Himself says: *"Vade et corripe fratrem tuum; si te audierit, lucratus es fratrem tuum; sin minus, sit tibi tanquam ethnicus et publicanus."* (Go and rebuke thy brother; if he shall hear thee, thou shalt gain thy brother; and if he will not hear... let him be to thee as the heathen and publican. Matt. xviii. 15—17.) And thus I intend to act. I will wait twelve days, beginning from to-morrow, for your answer. If it be such as it ought to be and such as will alone suffice to show that you will follow the example of the Duke and of Don Alphonsus, our uncle [1], to say nothing of fulfilling your obligation to God and to me for the services I have rendered you; if, I say, this should be your decision, I shall return to Rome consoled. But if you behave otherwise towards God and myself, I shall end the matter in the way I have made known to the Archpriest. I shall then grieve for the hard lot that has befallen me, and wait until Almighty God intervenes with His strong and holy Hand. I warn you again of the power of this Hand, and bid you beware lest you feel its weight; for He is always God, whether He waits for the repentance of a sinner or punishes the offences committed against Himself or against those who wish to be His servants. I have not failed to do my duty in the matter; no, I have not failed, *et iterum* (once more) I say, I have not failed. I repeat this three times, for you will certainly repent it if you fail to do yours. I pray God to move your heart and to grant you that happiness and abundance of graces which I desire for you with all my heart and soul.

Milan, February 6th 1590." [2]

[1] Both of them had willingly submitted to the laws of the Church in delicate matrimonial difficulties. *Schröder*, Life of St. Aloysius 384.

[2] *Fozzi*, Lettere di S. L. G. 43 ff.

On receipt of this very urgent letter Rudolph at once hastened to Milan to see his brother, and apparently tried to obtain at least a short respite before the publication of the marriage, pleading that he must first go to Germany, probably in order to make sure of the Emperor's consent. On the 9th of February 1590 Aloysius, who feared the worst results might ensue from such a delay, again wrote to his brother to urge him to the greatest haste:

"Your Excellency will already have recognized that the expedient which I propose is all the more easy, since instead of the two things that I asked of you in my first letter after your departure from Milan I now only insist upon *one,* which you owe to me not only as a brother but simply as a Christian. In conformity with what you told me, I wrote to Rome about my return, which will take place shortly, though I do not yet know the exact day. And since I must first await your departure for Germany (unless, indeed, you take a better resolution), then I think *quo citius, eo melius* (the sooner the better). So make haste, and rest assured that I will certainly not fail to do what I promised you, provided that it is possible. But do not fail, on your part, to do what you owe to me; once again, do not fail, as I feel sure you will not. I commend you to God as earnestly as I can, and ask for you of His Divine Majesty every blessing and happiness and abundance of His holy grace. Herewith I conclude.

Milan, Feb. 9th 1590.

P. S. I desire in every way that we should be friends *in Domino* (in the Lord); for from Him I must obtain the strength to do my duty, however difficult it may be for a religious. Remember that of the two things you promised me, to make known the marriage and to send a certain person away from the house, I only insist now upon *one,*

and this too after your return from Germany [1]. Your journey thither must take place before my departure for Rome, which depends upon my superiors there, who have informed me that it is to be soon." [2]

At last Rudolph made up his mind to take the right course of action and make known his marriage *before* his journey to Germany. At the beginning of March Aloysius came to Castiglione for the second time, to put the affair in order. He himself told his mother the surprising news and spoke in favour of the young couple; and the Marchioness at once declared herself satisfied and received Helen, who possessed excellent qualities of mind and heart, with all her heart as a daughter.

The other relatives, including the Duke of Mantua, to whom Aloysius wrote informing him of the matter, also sent favourable replies. Aloysius managed even to pacify his uncle Alphonsus so effectually, that he promised to make Rudolph his heir. And lastly, Aloysius himself announced to the people the marriage of his brother with Helen. The whole family, including Donna Martha, Rudolph, Helen, her father, and even Aloysius then met at a joyful banquet [3]. Thus this unfortunate affair was also settled to the honour of God and to the satisfaction of all.

Aloysius' mother now begged him, ere he left, to deliver the long-deferred address to the people. This he did on the 3rd of March 1590, in a little church near the Castle, which still stands. Although he wished the occurrence to be kept as quiet as possible, the church was crowded with people. Aloysius spoke of Our Saviour's great love to us,

---

[1] That is to say: "Until the marriage has been made public, Helen must not be in the Castle."

[2] *Jozzi*, Lettere di S. L. G. 46.

[3] *Maineri*, Vita di S. L. G. 157.

and exhorted all to receive Holy Communion on the following day, which was Quinquagesima Sunday. The words of the holy preacher were not without effect. The priests of the parish church and the Friars were kept hearing confessions the whole night, and on the following morning over seven hundred persons went to Holy Communion. Aloysius served Mass, and in the afternoon gave an instruction on Christian doctrine. The strictness of the young religious and the good example set at the Castle had the very best results on the parishioners. Many who had been living in sin were married, and families who had been estranged were reconciled.

Aloysius could now take leave with a joyful and thankful heart. His sacrifices and labours, aided by the grace of God, had not been fruitless. He started for Milan on the 12th of March, after celebrating his 22nd birthday at the Castle on the 9th.

Aloysius here again affords a proof of how useful holiness is to the world, not merely in spiritual, but even in temporal matters. How much the Gonzaga family already owed to the eldest son whom they had offered to God! When all seculars are powerless to help, he appears, and disentangles with dexterous hand, by the mere prestige of his holiness, the knot of difficulties and disputes that had lasted for years. Thus it is with sanctity. It is "profitable to all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (1. Tim. iv. 8). So also is it with the religious life. The children who enter monasteries and convents are not completely dead to their parents and families. Apart from the consideration that they cause the least trouble and anxiety to their parents, how many unseen blessings do these children, consecrated to God in their quiet cells, draw down upon the dear ones whom they have left in the world! How often do parents,

broken-hearted and bowed down with grief, come to the convent doors to seek from their children comfort and relief! And they find it. Those who love God more than their parents prove to be their parents' best friends. The religious life neither requires nor causes hardness of heart and insensibility to all natural affection. How loving and self-sacrificing Aloysius is, and how ready to help his family, when he sees that they need him! The Saints do not forget the world; but they think of it only to save it. That is the best and the only true love.

16. Heaven in sight.

(Milan 1590.)

On the way to Milan Aloysius stopped at Piacenza, where all were happy to have him in their midst. One of the Fathers, who had seen him arrive at Pavia some years previously accompanied by a train of servants, went to his room to welcome him, and was not a little edified to find him busily cleaning his boots. His hands, on account of the severity of the northern winter, were swollen, chapped and full of chilblains. Gloves and other remedies were offered him, but he would accept nothing. When he at last arrived at the College in Milan, he drew a deep breath of relief and exclaimed: "How glad I am to be back in our own house at last! It is as though one who had been exposed to the cold and the storms of winter should suddenly find himself laid in a warm, soft bed. Away from our house, I experienced a sensation as of bitterest cold, and now that I am at home again a most pleasant warmth." But, though back in Milan, Aloysius did not forget the work of his brother's conversion which he had begun. A few days after his arrival he wrote him what is probably the longest letter he ever penned, full of salutary advice and hints for the good of Rudolph's soul:

"The desire I have always had for your welfare and the consolation you recently afforded me at Castiglione urge me to write as Our Lord inspires me, to tell you what I think will be useful and expedient for the assurance of your welfare and its preservation in the same Lord. And that is, that your Excellency prepare yourself during this holy season of Lent until Easter, and before your journey to Germany, to make a general confession, at least dating from the one which I know you made at Mantua five years ago, up to the present time. By this means you will make sure (as far as is possible in this life) that none of the offences against the Divine Majesty remain in your soul, which may perhaps have been omitted in those former secret and furtive confessions which you made during the time when, through human respect, you did not dare to acknowledge yourself a servant of Christ. This, I think, will be all the easier to you now that you have overcome and removed the principal difficulty, and nothing remains but the fruit of hope and the almost certain pledge of Divine grace which is to be expected from the means which I now recommend to you so earnestly.

Although Our Lord, Who has vouchsafed to touch your heart far more than any words or endeavours of mine could do, has also the means to enlighten and direct you to preserve this grace, yet I will fulfil my duty towards you and co-operate as hitherto with His Providence; and therefore I mention to you two means in particular that occur to me just now.

The first is always to have a high esteem for Divine grace. However much I might say about this, I should not be able to explain the very least part of this blessing of which God alone can make us recognize the true value, so I leave it to Him to instruct you concerning it. I

will only say this: As far as God is above all created things — such as honour, possessions, or anything else — so far our esteem for Him should surpass whatever esteem or love we may have for them. And if the limited capacity of our soul unhappily makes such a degree of esteem impossible to us, then we should at least take care to let it reach the highest degree attainable.

The second means is faithful co-operation with grace, *"operando bona non solum coram Deo, sed etiam coram hominibus"* (by good works performed not only in the sight of God, but also in the sight of men. — Rom. xii. 17). With regard then first to God, I again remind you of what I have already said to you by word of mouth. But since it is the duty of religious to recommend religion and the service due to God, I will here give you a few details which you may observe with profit, according as God may give you the grace.

The first of these is morning prayer, together with the Daily Exercise or similar prayers, which you may take from those which you will find after the Daily Exercise in the little book written at the desire of Cardinal Borromeo, which I now send you. And since other hints are given there which you can read, I will not speak of this at greater length, but only remind you of our compact with regard to Holy Mass.

Next, I wish that you would never go to bed in the evening without casting a glance into your soul to see whether you have been guilty of any offence against God; so that, in case you find you have committed a mortal sin, from which may God preserve you, you may at once resolve to atone for it as soon as possible by Confession. You must remember that this is always necessary whenever you are conscious of any such offence, and that you must not then wait for any particular time, such as Easter or

any other feast; for you cannot be sure that you will live until such a time.

With regard to the second of these duties — *"ut provideat bona coram hominibus"* (to perform good works in the sight of men) — I commend to you the respect we ought to have for our relatives and superiors, about which I will say no more now, since I know you have it at heart already. And only to fulfil my duty, but not because I think you have any need of my admonition, I recommend to you especially the respect you owe to our mother the Marchioness, as your mother, and such a mother.

Then, too, you know how, as the head of your brothers, you have to keep them united and act towards them in such a way that they may always have reason to thank God for this union. As regards your vassals I will only say this: God has placed them in a special manner under your protection, in order that you may show to them the special and spiritual care that you owe to them. You may see by the manner in which Divine Providence acts towards you how you ought to treat your dependants and care for their welfare. For the rest I trust to Our Lord to instruct and guide you Himself in the way of this life, until we reach the heavenly country. It is in order that I may find myself in this blessed country together with you and others again, that I have embraced the state in which I now live.

For the confession of which I spoke at the commencement of this letter, I propose to you one of our own Fathers, since they, by the obligations of our Institute, are experienced in such matters. If you go to Mantua, I strongly recommend to you Father Matthias, who was confessor to the late Duke William of happy memory. But should you have no occasion as yet to leave Castiglione, I have already spoken to the Father Rector of Brescia,

who places his College at the disposal of your Excellency, and will give you a confessor whenever you ask for one.

With this I conclude. And since the execution of what I have recommended to you depends more upon the grace of God than on my words or your own power, I promise to remember you constantly in my prayers, weak though they are. May God preserve you and guide you to that happy end to which His elect attain!

Milan, March 17th 1590."[1]

As if these words had not been impressive enough, Aloysius accompanied them by a letter to his sister-in-law:

"Illustrious Lady and Sister-in-law!

Pax Christi! I think it right to begin to avail myself of your Ladyship's help in promoting the spiritual progress of the Marquis, as I resolved to do when at Castiglione. I beg you, then, to urge him by word of mouth to do what I recommend to him in writing in the accompanying letter. Take care that, before he goes to Germany, he may make sure of being in the good disposition of soul in which, I hope, a general confession according to the instructions I have given him will place him.

I think your Ladyship will have received some spiritual books that I ordered at Brescia to be sent to you.

In conclusion I commend myself to you and beg of Our Lord to grant you every blessing.

Your Ladyship's obedient servant in Our Lord

Aluigi Gonzaga S. J.[2]

Milan, March 21st 1590."

A few days after writing these letters Aloysius began to feel the effects of the strain and exposure of his winter

[1] *Fozzi*, Lettere di S. L. G. 48 ff. [2] Ib. 53.

journey, and fell seriously ill. Scarcely was he partially convalescent, when he immediately resumed his studies, and followed the lectures with great diligence. One of his professors was Fr. Bernardine Medici, who had accompanied him from Rome as far as Florence. Among his fellow students was probably the celebrated Fr. Peter Coton, later on confessor to Henry IV. of France[1]. Aloysius would not suffer the slightest exception from the ordinary course of studies to be made in his regard. In the spiritual life he seemed to be trying to make up for the omission of some exterior austerities during his absence from the house, by being doubly fervent now. In the first place, he would not accept a private room. Then he had no peace until he had exchanged the gilt-edged copy of St. Thomas that had been given to him for an old, well-worn one. He spent what time he could spare from his studies, with the permission of his superiors, in lowly household duties. When he was occupied in the refectory, he gave the names of Saints to the different tables, in order to keep himself devout and recollected; and would then in spirit serve these Saints as he prepared each table. In Milan, as formerly in Rome, he sought by preference the society of the lay-brothers, helped them in their work and accompanied them on their errands. He did this because he felt attracted by their humility and modesty, and because he could talk unrestrainedly to them about God and spiritual things. He formed a particularly intimate friendship with the saintly Brother Augustine Salombrini, who had nursed him most devotedly during his illness, and to whom he became so much attached that he begged

[1] Unless Fr. Coton's stay there must be placed in the year 1585, while Aloysius was studying in Mantua for the first time. Bolland. 1005 A.

his superiors to give him this Brother as a travelling companion on his way back to Rome. His former companion, Br. Borlasca, had been sent on to Venice after their arrival in Milan.

In Milan it was particularly noticed how grateful Aloysius was for the slightest attention, how he always chose the worst seat, and always stood behind his companions when they were together. If he happened, from very recollection, to overlook a greeting and not return it, he accused himself of it as a fault and begged his superiors to reprimand him publicly. When his fellow-scholastics went to preach in the public squares during the Carnival, he asked as a favour to be permitted to assemble the people and keep them together, and did this with such friendliness and amiability that no one could resist him. He was particularly fond of accompanying those Brothers who went through the city begging alms for the poor, and felt great consolation in the thought that Our Lord also had accepted alms. On one of these begging errands he was once asked by a lady if he belonged to the Fathers of the Brera. On receiving an affirmative answer she began to express her pity for one of these Fathers, who had been of high rank in the world, and had now entered the Society. The nobleman in question was no other than Aloysius himself![1] He told the lady in reply that the Father was much less to be pitied than those who risk their eternal salvation by living in the enjoyments and the slavery of the world. The lady took these words so much to heart that she henceforth devoted herself in earnest to a spiritual life. In Milan also, whenever there were distinguished guests in the College, Aloysius was wont to go through the house with a long pole to remove the cobwebs. Once he had

[1] *Maineri*, Vita di S. L. G. 163.

to preach a sermon in the refectory, in the presence of several bishops and at their express wish, on the duties of the episcopal state. When he was congratulated upon his address, he answered that he had been glad to expose his inability to pronounce the letter "r" properly — for he had some difficulty in this.

Aloysius desired nothing more earnestly than to be of assistance to his companions in striving after perfection, for which they manifested great desire; and he therefore helped them whenever he could by advice and example, comfort and exhortation. One of them once asked him if a man who had lived amid wealth and luxury could easily accustom himself to the privation of all earthly things. Aloysius assured him that he could, if God put clay upon his eyes, as He once did to the man born blind, and opened them to the vanity of the world. Another Father complained to Aloysius of being so imperfect and wanting in virtue. The Saint replied in the words of the Psalmist: "Thy eyes did see my imperfect being, and in Thy book all shall be written" (Ps. cxxxviii. 16). He added that we must humble ourselves on account of our imperfections, but not lose courage, because in spite of these defects we are written in the book of God; He does not look upon them in order to condemn us, but to humble our pride and bring good out of these imperfections. Since it became known that Aloysius had attained to a very high degree of prayer, Fr. Achilles Gagliardi, an excellent religious and a learned divine, who had once examined him so closely with regard to his vocation, took occasion to have a conversation with him on the subject, and found that he had in reality made more progress during the four years of his religious life than many another in the course of a long life. Fr. Gagliardi pressed his inquiries still farther, asking him if he was not somewhat suspicious

of this intimate union with God, since the very purpose of the Society requires that its members should be in direct intercourse with the world, and both could not well be combined. It seemed to him, therefore, that such a gift of prayer did not agree well with the spirit of the Society. Aloysius replied that if that were the case he would make every effort to resist and overcome the habit of this method of prayer. From this the Father saw that Aloysius had attained to that rare and precious gift of prayer that knows how to combine both the active and the contemplative life.

These, certainly, are all signs of a sanctity that was ripe for heaven. And in fact Aloysius received here in Milan as it were a foretaste of heaven, in the shape of a very great grace from God. One morning, about a year before his death, as he was engaged in fervent prayer, God gave him a supernatural revelation that he would soon be summoned away from this life, and that he should during the following year detach his heart still more from all things temporal, and endeavour to prepare and adorn it with interior and exterior virtues. This heavenly communication completely transformed him interiorly; but he gave no outward indication of it, and continued his theological studies as before, although he could not take the same pleasure in them, since he was so soon to behold the Eternal Truth and Beauty Itself. After his return to Rome he told his confessor of the great grace he had received. The room in which Aloysius received this revelation was afterwards transformed into a chapel; and a picture representing an angel showing a skull to Aloysius perpetuates the remembrance of this miraculous event.

17. Homeward Bound.

(Rome 1590—1591.)

With the revelation of his approaching death Aloysius experienced a great longing to die in Rome, which had been the cradle of his religious life, and where he had left so many to whom he was united by the bonds of purest friendship. "If I have a home on earth, it is Rome, where I was born for Christ", he wrote at about this time in one of his letters [1]. But he was accustomed to overcome himself, and made no mention of his desire. However, Fr. Bernardino Rossignoli, the Rector of the Roman College, was using his influence with the General, Fr. Acquaviva, to get back Aloysius for the profit and edification of the College. The General granted his request, and wrote accordingly to Aloysius, as is shown by the following letter addressed by the Saint to Rudolph:

"Illustrious Brother, much honoured in Christ. Pax tibi. I had just finished the enclosed letter, when I received the one sent by your Highness. On the one hand it gave me great consolation, as I saw from it that my efforts with the relatives of your House have been successful. On the other hand, if I were to take its tone as the deliberate expression of your will, rather than as a mere outburst of the feelings and lower appetite, which, when unsubdued by reason, will in such cases be easily excited, it would seem to show a certain lack of charity and concord. Nevertheless the circumspection with which you will in future proceed, and the respect which you will show to all to whom it is due, will in time overcome all difficulties, if your Highness will only take care always to rely on God's help and remain in His grace, from which I hope

[1] Bolland. 1005 D. E.

and indeed will promise you every blessing. As far as I am concerned, you may rest assured that nothing will ever come between us (for you know that in spirit I am always with you, though absent in the flesh), except whatever might separate you from God. As long as you take care to preserve the favour of His Divine Majesty, I shall never fail to render you all the friendly services that my vocation permits, as I do in the present instance by means of the letter I enclose for our lady mother. I wish you to deliver it yourself and ask her to show it to you, in order that you may see from its contents how much I have your welfare at heart. But indeed I think there is no need of further proof of this; as I have already said, nothing that I hear about you, short of an offence against God, will grieve me, whereas all good news of you will always be a great consolation to me.

"I thought, also, now that my departure for Rome has been postponed until after Easter, that it could only be an advantage if, in addition to the letter which you intended to send me according to our agreement to take to Rome, you were to send a letter by post from Mantua, alluding to me and telling the most illustrious Cardinals in Rome of your journey to Germany, and also promising conscientiously to fulfil your duties as their relative. Thus you would oblige them all the more to give you a fitting recognition, and this mark of attention could not fail to promote the favourable issue for which I have been negotiating.

"I should also be glad if you would pay the banker the 45 scudi in gold that I borrowed (in notes-of-hand) on the credit of Jerome Verduro in Rome; and I also beg you, if it seems good to you, to commission the Archpriest or some other person equally worthy of trust to pay, in case it becomes necessary, the residue of the 100 of

which I spoke, for the other purpose I mentioned. You can do this in the way that seems best to you. I intend to take advantage of the opportunity that presents itself to start after Easter, in the good company of our Fathers, on the journey to my home, Rome, and shall, in order to remain in this company, go by way of Genoa. In passing through Tortona I shall pay my respects to her Highness the Duchess [1]. I should be very glad if you could ascertain whether a letter that I sent to Dr. Cuticio in Mantua, asking for certain books, has arrived. If he has not received them yet, I beg your Excellency to send them to me by Don Fabius Gonzaga; they must have been sent off from Rome by the intendant of the Lord Cardinal Scipio Gonzaga, so Fr. Hercules writes to me. If a favourable opportunity could be found to send a few other books to Rome as well, I should be very glad, and would send them to your Excellency as soon as possible. In conclusion I commend myself to you with all my heart. I have nothing more to add but the wish that you may fear God and keep his commandments (*timeat Deum et mandata ejus observet*), then you need fear nothing else, for God can do all things. But He requires us to co-operate with His grace. May He protect you and grant you every happiness and blessing! This shall be my unceasing prayer.

Your Excellency's most devoted brother in Our Lord
Aluigi Gonzaga S. J.

Milan, March 25th 1590."

"*P. S.* I shall be very glad if your Excellency can remember this long list of commissions and questions, and let me have an answer as soon as possible. It was quite

[1] Cf. p. 43, n. 1.

right of you to open the letters, and if any more come into your hands I shall be glad if you will do the same with them. If you can get a copy of my letter of the 6th of February, do me the favour to send it to me." [1]

Aloysius' joy at the news that he was to return to Rome was so great that it began to trouble his conscience, and he begged Fr. Medici to say a Mass that God might not suffer the plan to be carried out, if it were not for His honour. But soon there came an express order from the General for Aloysius to start for Rome in company with Fr. Gregory Mastrilli, who had been giving a course of Lenten sermons in Milan, and a few others. Now Aloysius was reassured, and he joyfully writes to one of his Roman companions, Fr. Cepari, to announce his coming:

"I think it will not be difficult to convince you how glad I am to be recalled to the Roman College, because I shall again see the Fathers and Brothers for whose society I long so much. I shall now, I hope, take part with still greater profit in your holy conversation and that of so many of our acquaintances, to whom I beg you to remember me particularly, and I recommend myself *ex toto corde, mente et animo* (with my whole heart, mind and soul) with great love to the entire College.

April 1590." [2]

At the beginning of May the little party started on their way. During the journey Aloysius again practised his accustomed virtues, so that he was pointed out as a Saint. There was a great famine at this time in Italy, and in the Apennines the travellers not infrequently found poor people who had died of starvation. Fr. Mastrilli remarked that

---

[1] Eco di S. Luigi, Milan 1891, No. 22, p. 2.

[2] *Fozzi*, Lettere di S. L. G. 54.

God had been very good to them in not letting them suffer such misfortune. But Aloysius replied that it was a still greater blessing not to have been born Mohammedans. He thought the two Fathers showed him too much honour and attention, and therefore kept away from them as much as he could, and preferred the society of his other travelling companions, who did not seem to notice him so much. In Sienna he served Fr. Peter Alagona's Mass and received Holy Communion in St. Catherine's house, in the very room she had occupied. He had a great devotion to this Saint.

In the College at Sienna he was requested to give a short address to the students. He went into the Church, prayed and reflected a little, and then retired to his room and noted down a few thoughts. He then preached a most impressive sermon on the text: *"Estote factores verbi, et non auditores tantum"* (Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only. — James i. 22). After his departure the following sketch of this sermon was found in a volume of St. Bernard. He had evidently written it in great haste. The leaf was venerated as a relic, and many copies of it were made and distributed. Short as this sketch is, it yet gives us a sufficient idea of his exhortation to the noble youths, and so we place it here for the general profit.

"God speaks to the soul in three ways: First, by secret inspiration. Cf. St. Bernard serm. 32.... Of this mode of Divine communication the same St. Bernard says that it is secret, and that we ought to keep it, not merely by retaining it in our memory, *'nam sic scientia inflat; sed sicut servatur panis. Verbum enim Dei panis vivus est, et cibus mentis; quamdiu panis in arca est, potest a fure tolli, a mure corrodi, vetustate corrumpi; ita Verbum Dei etc. Trajiciatur igitur in viscera tua, transeat in affectiones et mores tuos.'* That is what St. James says also: *'Estote*

factores.' In the second book of Moses we read that the manna, which *'non servabatur ad vescendum in die Sabbati'*, was spoilt; so it is also with the Word of God, which spoils if it is kept for anything else than *'ad vescendum'*."

"The second way: God speaks to us by the Holy Scripture, through the prophets in the Old Testament and through Christ in the New. So St. Gregory teaches, and so Scripture itself says: *'Saepe olim loquens Deus Patribus in prophetis, novissime autem in Filio suo.'* Of this speech of God also St. James says: *'Estote factores.'* For it profits a Christian little to possess the Holy Scriptures, if he does not live according to what they prescribe. It profits us little to have the commandments given by God in the Old Testament, if one does not live up to them; little, to know the beatitudes propounded by Christ in his discourses if etc.; little, to know how we ought to live . . . little, to know wherein perfection consists, if one is addicted to imperfections... Thus the Holy Scriptures are of no other use to such persons, than that they carry with them their death-sentence, as Urias carried that passed upon him by David to Joab."

"Thirdly, God speaks to us by his benefits. Thus St. Bernard asks... how God speaks to the soul and the soul to God, and says: *'Verbi lingua favor dignationis ejus est, animae vero devotionis affectus. Itaque locutio verbi infusio doni; responsio animae cum gratiarum actione.'* Of this speech also the Apostle says: *'Estote auditores et factores'*; he is not content that we should be hearers only, but also doers; for it is necessary not only that we should acknowledge the benefits of God, which is equivalent to hearing His Word, but that we should give them back to Him, which is signified by *'facere verbum ejus'*. We see how all springs have their origin in the sea and return to it. *'Omnium virtutum et scientiarum mare est Dominus Jesus*

Christus. Ab hoc continentia carnis, cordis industria, voluntatis rectitudo emanat: non solum ista, sed si quis callet ingenio, nitet eloquio, si quis moribus placet, ab eo fonte est.' To Him, then, all gifts must return; for as waters that do not run into the sea, but remain stagnant, form into ponds and become putrid, so it is with the Divine gifts of health, strength, talent, and eloquence. Students should offer their talents especially to God, as St. Augustine exhorts the youth Licentius."

"Now you have heard how God speaks to the soul in this threefold manner, and that we ought to do what He says; it will therefore be well now to consider *why* we ought to do it, and with what fervour."

"The reason why we must do it seems to me to be this: It is sufficient that God has spoken. It sufficed that He said: 'Let the world be made', and the world was created; ought it not to suffice when He says that we must be converted and go to Him by the way He wills?"

"Tell me, I beg of you: if your Grand Duke, who is now expected, were on his arrival to summon some native of this town — be he poor or rich — and promise to make him his adopted son, to give him a share in the duchy that really belongs only to his own son, and further to care for him as his own son as long as he lived and make him joint-heir of his states when he died; and supposing he laid down as the sole condition of granting this favour that this adopted son should so live as becomes the son of a duke, should leave the miserable hut in which he had dwelt and come to the ducal palace; should take off his wretched rags and put on rich garments; should give up his previous habits and his intercourse with the common people, and only frequent the society of the duke's son and the aristocracy; — which of you, I ask, would then

be satisfied merely to hear such an offer, instead of accepting it immediately?"

"But the Blessed Lord of Heaven is willing to adopt each one of us as His son; He promises to care for him in this world by His fatherly Providence, to such a degree that He will remember us more faithfully than a mother does her child, as He says by the mouth of Isaias xlix. 15: *'Numquid oblivisci potest'* etc.; and after this life He will give us the eternal inheritance, as St. Augustine says with regard to the words: *'Cum dederit dilectis suis somnum'* etc. He requires from us nothing more than that we forsake the poor hut of our fathers and mothers, either in reality or in spirit, according to the vocation of each, and dwell in the palace of the King of Heaven, which is ruled over by God and served by the angels; He wills that we should cast aside the miserable rags of self-love, and clothe ourselves with the festal garment of charity; we must give up the habits of common and vulgar people, i. e. renounce our imperfections and sins and acquire the habits of the Son of God, that is, gentleness, piety, justice, the fear of God and other virtues. Which of us, then, will be content only to hear this invitation, without accepting it? Who would hear such a proposal and not agree to it? Truly, it seems to me that no one could do so but one who does not understand the Word of God or realise His promises!"

"Aristotle proves by much reasoning in the 10th book of Ethics that spiritual enjoyments are much greater than carnal. Then he asks why, in spite of this, we do not seek the former, and says it is because we do not know them. He gives as an example a king's son, who, as long as he is a little child, values his nurse's milk or an apple given to him by a servant more than his paternal inheritance, because he knows nothing about the latter, and the former are familiar to him; but let him arrive at a maturer

age, and you will see how he despises those trifles and prefers the inheritance. So it is with us; because we do not know what God has prepared for them that love Him (1. Cor. ii), we also value more the nurse's milk, i. e. earthly comfort, relatives, father, mother etc., and prefer an apple of this earth to a lasting inheritance in heaven. May God give us the grace to come to that maturity of spirit by which we shall value everything according to its real worth, since all the greatness of this world is nothing in comparison to what God promises us: '*Super altitudines terrae sustollam te*' (Is. lviii. 14)." [1]

Was not that the very inmost treasure of grace from the soul of the speaker himself, the shortest and most striking description of his own readiness to follow the call of God? No wonder that such words, spoken by such lips, made the deepest impression upon his young hearers, and several youths took the resolution of forsaking the world and entering a religious Order.

On leaving Sienna, the travellers came to a mountain torrent called the Paglia, which was greatly swollen by recent rains and had overflowed its banks, whirling trees and stones away with it in its course, so that the guides declared the ford to be impassable. In this dilemma they caught sight of a man, apparently a fisherman, who repeatedly waded backwards and forwards through the water at the same place. Aloysius pointed to the spot, and they succeeded in effecting a crossing [2]. But the supposed fisherman had disappeared and was nowhere to be seen. At length the pilgrims saw rising before them not only the summit of Monte Mario and the lofty domes of St. Peter, but also the splendid cupola surmounting them, which

---

[1] Cf. *Cepari*, Edit. 1863 (Appendix) 461 ff.

[2] Bolland. 1008 C.

Sixtus V. had had erected, and which had been completed on the 14th of May 1590.

In Rome the arrival of Aloysius caused universal pleasure. Knowing that this was to be the last stage of his life, he lost no time in obeying the Divine admonition and striving to attain as high a degree of perfection as possible. In November he began his fourth year of theology, and the Rector ordered that he should have a room to himself. He found one just to his own taste — a dark little hole at the top of a staircase, with only a skylight window, and just large enough to hold a bed, a chair, and a prie-dieu, which had to serve as a table also. It had never yet been given to a student; but when the Rector went to visit Aloysius there, he found him as happy as a king in his palace, and could not help being reminded of St. Alexius and his lodging on the Aventine hill. On this Thabor of extreme poverty Aloysius prepared to take flight heavenwards; and as a dove about to soar cleanses and arranges her plumage, he too regarded himself to see if there was a speck of the dust of earthly attachments anywhere about him. After long reflection he collected all his writings, among them his notes on St. Thomas Aquinas, and took them to the Rector. The latter asked why he wished to give them up, since he had written them himself and needed them; and Aloysius replied that this was the only thing that he felt a slight attachment to, as being the work of his own mind, and he wished to be free from it. He said to one of his companions: "I have already buried my dead, and think of them no more; it is time now to think of the next life." He did not like anyone to think particularly of him or have a special affection for him; not even from his superiors would he tolerate this. If he noticed that anyone was specially attached to him he shunned his society; and his superiors,

knowing this, took care not to treat him differently from the others.

Aloysius seemed now to be particularly occupied with the virtue of love of God and his neighbour. He even surpassed himself in friendliness towards all his brethren. He liked best to read books about the love of God, like the Soliloquies of St. Augustine, St. Bernard's Exposition of the Canticles, and the writings of St. Catherine of Sienna; and the greatest pleasure that could be given him was to turn the conversation on this topic. His pale face would then assume a delicate rosy hue, and often he could scarcely find words from emotion. On one occasion something about the love of God was read at table, and he was so overcome that he stopped eating and sat there as if in ecstasy. His neighbours noticed this, and thinking it was an indisposition, asked him if he felt unwell. Aloysius blushed to find himself observed, cast down his eyes, and did not recover his wonted composure till the meal was nearly over. He very often spoke of death. Indeed, he longed for it; for he thought now that he was not yet a priest, and had no account to give of the many graces and heavy obligations of the sacerdotal state, he could meet death with more confidence. We become best acquainted with the dispositions of the Saint at this time by reading his letters, of which more have been preserved to us dated from this last year of his life than from earlier times. We give here first of all a letter to one of his fellow-students, Br. Anthony Guelfucci, which especially gives us an idea of the manner of intercourse and exchange of thought among the young religious of the Roman College at this time.

"Pax Christi! I had intended not to write until I received a letter from you, according to our agreement at your departure. But on the one hand my affection for

you and my desire to derive consolation from a conversation with you by letter (since any other is rendered impossible by distance), and on the other hand the favourable opportunity offered me by Fr. Mancinelli's journey to your vicinity, have induced me to break my resolution. With these lines, then, I salute you *et amplector in Domino* (and embrace you in the Lord) with all my affection. God knows what a consolation it has been to me to hear the good news of you that Fr. Provincial, as he tells me, has received from you. May Our Lord, Who grants you this precious time for your spiritual profit, fill you with His gifts and so increase in you His grace, that it may tend not only to your own advantage, but after your return, may also benefit those who desire your company and need to make spiritual progress as much as I do. In the meantime help me with your own prayers and also by recommending me to those of Fr. Pescatore, which I very, very much desire. I on my part do not fail in my poor prayers to recommend you to Our Lord. May it please His Divine Majesty to let us all make progress in His holy service. In conclusion I commend myself to you *iterum atque iterum* (again and again), and beg you to commend me to Fr. Pescatore and to Father Mutius de Angelis. Fr. Marius Fuccioli greets you and bids me tell you he has received your letter, and if you need anything he is at your service; and I say the same of myself, as far as I am able.

Rome, Dec. 12th 1590."[1]

The other letters are addressed to his brother Rudolph and to his mother. There was again some disagreement in the family, which caused the Saint, if not grief, at least

[1] *Fozzi*, Lettere di S. L. G. 58 f.

some anxiety for the peace of his House, and filled him with compassion, especially for his sorely-tried mother. The harmony between Rudolph and his younger brothers was not quite what it should have been. It was again the troublesome question of "mine and thine" that divided the brothers. Aloysius did not interfere in the actual dispute, but took the best means of settling it, by tactfully urging Rudolph to receive the Sacraments frequently. Rudolph had written to him saying that he had derived benefit even for his physical health in receiving them. Aloysius hastened to reply:

"Pax Christi! I received the day before yesterday a letter from your Excellency dated the beginning of September, which gave me much consolation, as it told me what an excellent remedy you have made use of for the sickness sent to you by Our Lord, in having recourse to Him Himself for the recovery of your health. I have also returned thanks to Him for having cured you. As you say in your letter, this medicine which you have used has not only restored you to health but will also strengthen you and preserve you from a relapse; and therefore I beg you to make use of it not only for bodily sickness, but also, even when you are well in body, as soon as any spiritual weakness requires it; for it was for this that it was really instituted by Christ. I entreat His Divine Majesty to guard you from any such spiritual infirmity, and at the same time I exhort you to make use of the medicine as a preservative. One must not wait until one is sick to take such a remedy; but use it frequently at other times also, for the end for which you tell me you have taken it.

"I am consoled to hear that the dispute with His Highness the Duke of Mantua is at an end, for I think it will now be easier for you to preserve the grace of the Divine Majesty, which I desire greatly for you, and also the favour

of the Duke, as lord and head of your family. I hope and am convinced that between you and your brothers there will never be any contention or discord other than such as may arise between a father and his sons, for the good and benefit of the latter. As my vocation does not allow me to entertain you with worldly news, to which I have bade farewell for ever, I will tell you here once for all what I think of the matter in question. This is my opinion: although every law requires that positive rights should give way to those of nature, it seems to me that your Excellency will only do what is reasonable and perhaps even your duty, if in any dispute or difference of opinion that may occur you always prefer the natural laws of blood-relationship and brotherly union to any written laws of the jurists. But I think it is unnecessary to remind you of this, for it seems to me that you already have it sufficiently at heart; and so in conclusion I beg of God to grant you the grace and peace that I desire for you. Here in Rome we have again a Vacant See, and we are praying for the election of a Pope who may carry out the good projects with which Our Lord had inspired him who, for our sins, was called away from this world after so few days [1].

Rome, Oct. 4th 1590." [2]

The one who suffered most by the constant discord in the family, which had now lasted for years, was the poor, sorely-tried mother; for her Aloysius had the most abundant and powerful words of comfort. It is as edifying as it is touching to read these letters written by a Saint to a strong and courageous Christian woman. He writes:

"Pax Christi! Since I know how much your Ladyship desires my letters and how consoled you feel by them, I

[1] Urban VII., cf. chap. 18, p. 238.

[2] *Fozzi*, Lettere di S. L. G. 55.

will take occasion of the holy feast of Christmas, to greet you and wish you the happiness that during this holy season I have begged with my whole heart for you from Our Lord. It offers me an occasion of writing more welcome and better suited to my taste than one concerning temporal affairs and worldly business, which I have forsaken once for all; it is most tiresome to me to speak of such things, and I understand very little about them. May God, then, through the general joy of Holy Church and through the pleasure that He Himself has in the temporal Birth of His Son, comfort Your Ladyship and fill you with every grace. And may He do this through the intercession of the Blessed Mother of God, who, as you may imagine, was at this time full at once of joy and sorrow. Her sorrow was great on account of the temporal poverty that she suffered in the stable, and which did not even permit her to protect her Holy Child Jesus Christ against the cold, or to alleviate the other temporal distress and privations from which He suffered. We may imagine that this sorrow was given to her in place of the pains of childbirth, from which by a special privilege she was exempt. But she was also full of joy at the sight of her Divine Son, Who had assumed a visible form here on earth. And as Our Lord says of women, that they are in grief while they travail, but rejoice when they have brought forth, and forget all their past suffering for joy that a man has been born into the world; so it seems to me that the most glorious Virgin, in contemplating the temporal wants of her Son, felt pain and sorrow, like that of childbirth, because she could not relieve them as she would have wished. But when she gazed upon her Son, she rejoiced and felt free from all pain and sorrow, not only because a Man, but also a God had been born into the world. So I take the liberty to give your Ladyship the following advice for

the state in which you are. Take as your mirror the example of the Blessed Virgin; and if temporal cares and anxieties for the welfare of your younger sons often cause you pain and trouble (such as the glorious Virgin also felt at the thought of the temporal wants of her Son Jesus), then console yourself as she did, and take comfort from her example. She is our true Queen, from whose example we must receive more strength and greater joy than from that of the Queen of Spain whom your Ladyship served, or from any other who has been in a like condition. If, then, it is a consolation to the afflicted to have companions who suffer similar troubles, what greater comfort can your Ladyship have than the companionship of the Blessed Virgin Mary, since she also had troubles and sorrows so similar to your own?

"I wished to write this to you, just as it occurred to me *in Domino* (in Our Lord), and to satisfy your desire and give you the consolation that you think you derive from my letters. With regard to what the Lord Cardinal Della Rovere told me, His Eminence himself will have told you what he thinks best. I quite agree with him, and should only wish to add that, if the dispute of which he spoke to me is to be ended not by a lawsuit (which, it seems to me, would be by no means fitting between brothers), but by arbitrators, it would be better to choose some one there rather than here.... I, on my part, will take care to beg Our Lord Jesus Christ that, as the angels sang at His Nativity: '*Gloria in excelsis Deo et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis*', He may deign to grant to all members of your illustrious House true peace and a sincere good will, with the fulness of His grace.

Rome, Dec. 31st 1590." [1]

[1] *Jozzi*, Lettere di S. L. G. 60 ff.

Thanks be to God, Aloysius was able on the 26th of January 1591 to thank his brother for the happy termination of the dispute:

"Pax Christi! It is a long time already since I have paid my respects to your Excellency by letter, so the opportunity I have of doing this to-day is all the more gratifying to me. I have first of all an act of justice to recommend to you. . . ." (He here asks Rudolph to protect against unjust molestation some young women who wish to enter a convent.) "Next I recommend to your Excellency another work of mercy, which, indeed, I think you are in duty bound to practise. This is that you remember to aid your vassals in their poverty, especially this year; for if the distress is as great with you as it is here in this city and in the surrounding country, it has indeed reached the highest point. I commend this matter most earnestly to you, who, I think, will certainly not have forgotten the good advice and the frequent use of the medicine for soul and body, of which you last wrote to me [1]. So I will not write at greater length upon this point, but in conclusion will only tell you what consolation I have derived from a letter from our mother, telling me of the peaceable agreement you have come to with your brothers about the disputed property. The agreement seems to me to be excellent, and well calculated to preserve the peace and union which I pray God to grant you. I am not sending a letter by this messenger to the Signora [2] our mother, and therefore beg your Excellency to greet her in my name, which will be a comfort to her, and also to give her good news of my health. I beg you

[1] The reception of the Sacraments.

[2] This is the second time that he gives her this title in his letters.

also to remember me to the Lady Marchioness, your wife, to my brothers, and to Monsignor the Archpriest etc." [1]

As though to keep Rudolph on the right path by giving him repeated tokens of his affection, Aloysius again wrote him a few lines as early as the 26th of February 1591:

"Pax Christi! Although I have no particular occasion to write, still I will do so to satisfy the bearer of this letter, and to tell you that the state of my health, thank God, is fairly good. I wish and pray that the Divine Majesty may grant your Excellency the same grace *in utroque homine* (for body and soul). To-day is the last of the Carnival, and if I am not mistaken it was on this day or shortly before that I left you last year in Castiglione with such good resolutions and spiritual desires. I have now, then, nothing to say but to beg you to remember those good resolutions now *et in posterum* (and in the future), and to put them into execution. I hope that He *qui dedit velle, dabit et perficere* (Who granted you to will, will also give you the grace to accomplish); and I will have recourse to the Lord God in my prayers, weak as they are, and beg Him to grant you this grace. In conclusion I commend myself to your Excellency *in Domino* (in the Lord)." [2]

It is consoling for us to see how God tried His chosen one in all kinds of ways up to his very last illness, and did not even spare him the painful trial of seeing for a time scandal (as he supposed), fraternal disputes, and disunion reign in his own family. But how edifying it is to see how little Aloysius troubles about the temporal and worldly side of these matters, but only watches from his lofty point of vantage over the danger for souls and the offence against God! God, his peace, and His grace —

[1] *Jozzi*, Lettere di S. L. G. 64 f. [2] Ib. 66 f.

that is all that he desires for himself and for others, and more than ever now that he is nearing the end of his pilgrimage.

18. Veni, Domine Jesu!

(1591.)

The years 1590 and 1591 were for Italy, as for many other countries, most unfortunate, on account of bad harvests and high mortality among the people. In Rome alone the victims were reckoned — though probably the estimate is exaggerated — at 60,000. Even on the Papal throne Death sought its victims with terrifying haste. On the 27th of August 1590 the energetic Sixtus V. succumbed to a malignant fever; and his successor, Urban VII., occupied the throne for only 13 days, from the 15th to the 28th of September. He was succeeded on the 5th of December by Gregory XIV.; but he also died in the following year on the 30th of December.

Christian charity sought to struggle against the famine and pestilence and relieve distress by every possible means. In his last Consistory, Sixtus V. set aside 500,000 ducats for the sufferers, and after his death 90,000 more were added to this sum by the College of Cardinals. The Society of Jesus was not the last on this field of love and honour. Besides the alms given to the casual poor who came to the door, the Roman College provided regularly for the support of 300 poor, and the Noviciate of Sant' Andrea for the same number. The General, Father Acquaviva, had the poor sick people sought out everywhere, and accommodated as many of them as possible in the College. He also erected a temporary hospital in the vicinity of the Professed House, behind the palace of Count Petroni, and devoted himself personally to the care of those infected with the plague. Those of his subjects who could

not nurse the sick scoured the city to beg alms for them. More than one religious fell a victim to this magnanimous charity; among them Aloysius.

To anyone who, at one stroke, wishes to make certain of his salvation and perfection and to give the Saviour of mankind the greatest proof of his love, nothing is more welcome than such an opportunity. How, then, could Aloysius hesitate? At his urgent request he was at last permitted at least to go and beg for the sick. He went from door to door with his wallet, and even wrote to Rudolph and his mother to ask for clothes for the poor. The latter sent him a generous donation, and Aloysius wrote to thank her as follows:

"Pax Christi! It was a great consolation to me to distribute the clothes to our brethren, the poor. May our Lord God, Who leaves nothing that is done out of charity unrewarded, grant you a rich reward and recompense in the heavenly country for which it seems to me that I must now long more than ever. May He by His grace grant it to us, and that soon; for I feel already that *dies mei abbreviabuntur* (my days are numbered). May God grant you the fulness of His blessings. I kiss your hand.

Rome, Feb. 23rd, 1591." [1]

On hearing that Prince John de Medici, whom he had known well from his childhood, was in Rome to pay his respects to the Pope in the name of the Grand Duke, Aloysius asked permission to pay a visit to this prince in his beggar's garb, hoping to receive from him a large alms for the sick, and also to give him edification. He attained both these objects [2].

[1] *Josz*, Lettere di S. L. G. 64, 68.

[2] Bolland. 1023 F. This is probably the same Don John who is spoken of on p. 27.

But Aloysius was not long satisfied with collecting alms. He left his superiors no peace until they permitted him to wait upon the sick also. So, although himself very weak, he went with some companions, under the leadership of Fr. Nicholas Fabrini of Florence, then Minister of the Roman College, to the hospital of St. Sixtus [1].

It was terrible and heartrending to see how the poor sufferers, disfigured by disease and pale as death, staggered about the corridors, fell down on the stairs, and lay about in the corners, struggling with death. Aloysius and his companions seemed to these poor people to be angels from heaven. They led or carried the sick to their beds, undressed and washed them, gave them food and medicine, prepared them for confession, and encouraged them to bear their misfortune patiently. In vain was one of Aloysius' companions, Tiberius Bondi (a Genoese) warned not to expose himself so recklessly to the danger of infection; he replied that the sight of Br. Aloysius' example had taken from him all fear and anxiety. And in truth Aloysius' zeal knew no bounds. The most loathsome and repulsive patients were the very ones he sought out and tended.

After a time some of his companions were attacked by the pestilence, and the first who lay on the bier was Tiberius Bondi. How Aloysius envied him his lot! In vain was he exhorted to take care of his health and not petition his superiors so much. He replied that he thought this desire he had of tending the sick was inspired by God, and that it was his duty to obey it, as he had the permission of his superiors. If they refused, he would abandon it at once; but he envied his companions, for he

[1] Bolland. 1023 F. 1024 F.

hoped he was now in the grace of God, but did not know what might be the case later on [1].

The evident danger of infection in the hospital of St. Sixtus induced his superiors to forbid Aloysius to go there any longer. But at his renewed entreaty they permitted him to visit another hospital, that of Santa Maria della Consolazione, not far from the Professed House, at the foot of the Capitol, where less dangerous patients were received. On his way thither Aloysius one day found a man stricken with the pestilence, and lying forsaken in the street. He went up to him at once, took him on his shoulders, carried him to the hospital and attended to his wants [2]. In the hospital, which still stands, the memory of this deed of the Saint is perpetuated by a statue representing him, strong in charity, carrying the sick man on his shoulders [3]. Probably it was in performing this act of charity that Aloysius contracted the germ of the mortal disease [4]; at all events he returned home ill, and was put to bed (March 3rd, 1591).

His joy was now unbounded, for he thought the revelation he had had in Milan was about to be fulfilled, and he would soon go to heaven. He asked his confessor, Fr. Robert Bellarmine, if he might abandon himself unrestrainedly to this joy. Bellarmine reassured him, telling him that the desire to die and to be with God was a good one, and the Saints also had indulged in this longing. On receiving this reply Aloysius abandoned himself entirely to grace, which already bore him in spirit to heaven. The fever made rapid strides, and on the seventh day brought him to the point of death. He made his con-

[1] Bolland. 1020 E. [2] Ib. 1018 B.
[3] *Narbone*, Dieci glorie di S. L. G. 231.
[4] Bolland. 1016 F.

fession with great care, and received Holy Communion and Extreme Unction from the hands of the Rector, Fr. Rossignoli. He himself replied to the prayers of the sacred ceremony, in a strong and firm voice. His brethren shed many tears at the thought of losing him, but were much edified to see how joyfully he looked forward to his death. At this solemn moment Aloysius, usually so careful to avoid attracting attention to himself, begged the Father Rector to make a statement in his name to the many companions who surrounded his sick-bed. Several of them had often told him that he would experience on his death-bed the same regret as St. Bernard did for having treated his body too roughly. He wished, therefore, to tell them and all others that he felt no such remorse at all; that, if he could regret anything, it was that he had not done as much as he might have done in this respect. It was a consolation to him that he had never done anything without the knowledge and permission of his superiors, and he did not remember ever having broken any rule. These words deeply moved them all. Even under these circumstances, and so near to death, Aloysius could not restrain his love for penance and austerity. When the Provincial, Father John Carminata, came to visit him, he begged his permission to take the discipline. The Provincial jestingly answered that it would be too mild to be of any use, seeing that he had not the strength to do it. Aloysius suggested that someone else might do him the service; but was told that it was not permissible to strike a cleric, and whoever did it would be committing an irregularity. He then begged at least to be placed on the floor and allowed to die there; but this too was refused.

However, Aloysius was not to die yet. On the seventh day the crisis of the fever was safely passed, and he gradually

recovered strength. This news awakened such joy in Castiglione, where, on receiving a false report of his death, a dirge had already been sung [1], that Rudolph in his delight took the golden chain from his neck, broke it in pieces, and distributed the fragments to those around him. But this apparent convalescence was only a temporary postponement of death. A lingering, consuming fever remained, which put an end to his life in a few months.

On the 5th of April 1591 he wrote to his mother:

"Pax Christi! For some time I have had reason and opportunity to comply with your Ladyship's desire and write you a few lines, and I do so now all the more willingly, since you give me an occasion to afford you sure consolation. I do not know what better advice I could give you than to exhort you to consider that Mother who suffered more than any other, and to see how she took her example from her beloved Son Jesus Christ, Who took upon Himself all our cares, sufferings, and miseries, and even death itself, in order to exhort us to patience in suffering and to give us eternal life. Your Ladyship's sorrows are many and heavy, but they cannot last long; for if we receive everything with holy resignation from the hand of the Divine Majesty, we shall soon and certainly enter into the Land of Promise. Console yourself then with the thought of the Blessed Virgin, and seek with her your rest. I see that I also am drawing near the end of my sufferings, and if it please the Divine Majesty, I hope to obtain from Our Lord the greatest grace that one can receive, that is, to die (as I hope) in His grace. I have already received the holy Viaticum and Extreme Unction, but it pleased God to defer this

[1] Bolland. 1021 F.

grace and to prepare me for it by a fever which still remains. The doctors, who do not know how it will end, are trying by their remedies to cure my body. I rejoice to think that God our Lord wills to give me a much better health than the doctors can do, and so I pass the time happily in the hope that in a few months I shall be called by the Lord God out of this land of the dead to that of the living, from the society of men here below to that of the angels and saints of heaven; in short, from the sight of earthly and perishable things to the contemplation of God, Who is in Himself all that is good. This will be a ground for consolation to your Ladyship also, because you love me and wish for my good. I beg you to pray and to ask the Brothers of Christian Doctrine to pray for me, in order that during the short time I have still to voyage on the sea of this world God may deign, through the intercession of His Only-begotten Son, of the Blessed Virgin and of SS. Celsus and Nazarius, to drown my imperfections in the Red Sea of the most sacred Passion of Jesus; so that, freed from my enemies, I may enter into the Land of Promise to behold and enjoy God, Whom I beg to grant you His consolation. Amen." [1]

This time of waiting was to be a rich harvest of virtues for Aloysius and edification for his companions. He did not forget even now the poverty he loved so well. The bed on which he lay had simple linen curtains and a mattress, because it had at first been intended for an old and invalid Father. This was all much too good and too luxurious for Aloysius, and he begged to be given a bed such as all the others had. He was set at rest by being told that this bed had been specially prepared for someone else, and that it did not in the least infringe religious

[1] *Fozzi*, Lettere di S. L. G. 69 ff.

poverty. The physician had prescribed for him a medicine very disagreeable to the taste. He did not drink it down at one draught, but sipped it very slowly. Instead of taking the sugar that had been placed within his reach to relieve his cough, he drank a few drops of liquorice-water, thinking that this was more suitable for a poor man.

The Cardinals Della Rovere and Scipio Gonzaga, Aloysius' relatives, repeatedly visited him during his illness [1]. They offered him their palaces, because he could there have better care and perhaps preserve his life. But Aloysius replied that his Order took good care of him, and that it was better to die; the Saints also had wished to die, in order to be sure of their salvation [2]. The Father Rector told their Eminences that he would willingly and regularly send them information of the condition of the invalid, to save them the trouble of coming so often; but they would not deprive themselves of the spiritual profit and edification they derived from their visits. Even when Cardinal Scipio was suffering from an attack of gout, he had himself carried in a litter to the bedside of Aloysius. The Saint one day affectionately told him that he regarded him as his spiritual father, because he had helped by his influence to enable him to follow his vocation. The Cardinal was moved to tears, and replied that on the contrary he must venerate Aloysius as his father and teacher in the spiritual life, since he had always set him such a good example. At his departure the Cardinal said that the death of this youth would leave a painful blank in his

---

[1] Cardinal Vincent Gonzaga is not named, and was probably absent or himself already ill. He died in the same year 1591, on the 22nd of November. *Rittershusii* Duces Mantuae tab. D.

[2] Bolland. 1018 E.

life, for he had never visited him without carrying away with him extraordinary edification and inspiration in his heart, and a mozetta wet with tears of emotion. Aloysius, he added, was indisputably the happiest and most praiseworthy of all the Gonzagas [1].

Aloysius also gave striking evidence during this period of his love of prayer. He often asked to be dressed, and would then make a pilgrimage round the infirmary to the various pictures of the Saints that were there, standing some time to pray and meditate before each one. The infirmarian offered to bring the pictures to his bed, to save him this exertion. But he would not permit it, saying that those were his stations. When there was no one in the room, he profited by his solitude to get up and kneel beside his bed to pray. As soon as he heard anyone coming, he rose as though he were just about to get into bed. The infirmarian wondered to find him so often out of bed, until at last he began to suspect the reason, and watched until he caught him on his knees in prayer. Aloysius blushed like a child at being detected, and faithfully and willingly obeyed the Brother's order to discontinue the practice. Indeed, his humility, obedience, and patience left nothing to be desired. He would speak now only of spiritual things, and his companions readily fulfilled his wishes. If, however, anything else chanced to be spoken of, he made no remark — he was too humble and charitable for that; but showed his pleasure when the conversation turned again upon spiritual topics by joining in with renewed eagerness. He had no objection to other good or indifferent subjects of conversation, but thought that in his circumstances it was more fitting to speak only of what directly related to God [2].

---

[1] Bolland. 1024 C. 1040 A. [2] Ib. 1021 A.

Although ill himself and in need of care, Aloysius could not forget his dear patients. When the Father General visited him, he begged his permission to take a vow to nurse those stricken by the plague if he recovered. In the meantime, as long as he was able to rise from his bed, he visited those of his brethren who were sick. Father Louis Corbinelli, of Florence, a very aged man, was at this time very ill — indeed, at death's door. The two were very good friends, and often sent greetings to each other through the infirmarian, when Aloysius could no longer go to the other's room. But the old Father left the infirmarian no peace until he one day carried Aloysius to him and placed him in an arm-chair by his bedside. The two friends now conversed for a long time on spiritual matters. On taking leave of each other, Fr. Corbinelli, out of veneration for Aloysius' virtue and sanctity, begged him to give him his blessing, as they would probably not meet again in this life. But that was altogether too much for the Saint's humility, and he would not for any consideration, as a mere cleric, bless a priest; on the contrary, he wished to be blessed by the Father. The infirmarian, seeing by the old man's face how pained he was at this refusal, put an end to the dispute and told Aloysius to give the Father this pleasure. Then Aloysius had a happy inspiration; he folded his hands and said: "God bless us both and grant your Reverence's wish. We will pray for each other." Then he sprinkled the Father and himself with holy water. Not long after this the infirmarian came one morning to Aloysius and asked, while opening the window, how he had passed the night. "Not at all well", answered the invalid. "It seemed to me that I saw Fr. Corbinelli three times to-night. The first time he asked me to pray for him, for he was in great distress; the second time he begged me to pray for patience for him in his severe

trial; the third time he told me that he was now going to heaven, and again asked me to pray for him, saying that he would do the same for me, and that we should soon meet again. I woke up every time he spoke to me, but tried to persuade myself that it was only imagination, and resolved to ask for a penance in the morning for having so badly obeyed the doctor's orders to sleep. But I could not close my eyes again after the third apparition." The Brother made no reply. Fr. Corbinelli had really died during this night, the 31st of May. Aloysius persisted in asserting what he had seen, and assured Fr. Bellarmine that he knew Fr. Corbinelli was in heaven. Out of veneration for Aloysius, the aged Father had begged to be buried in the same chapel where he too would rest after his death.

Aloysius had still twenty days to live, and his desire to die ever increased. When the infirmarian brought him medicine, he asked him, smiling, if he thought these drops would hinder him from being united to God in heaven [1]. He could never be persuaded to pray for his recovery. "*Melius est dissolvi*" (it is better to die), he would always answer firmly, with evident joy at the happiness that lies in these words. This joy and longing were still further increased by the following circumstance. One evening he asked Fr. Bellarmine in the course of conversation whether he thought any souls went straight to heaven without entering Purgatory. Bellarmine replied in the affirmative, and added that he thought Aloysius would be one of these happy souls; for since God had granted him, as he himself acknowledged, so many great graces and favours, He surely would not deny him this grace also. At these words Aloysius was so overjoyed that he

[1] Bolland. 1020 D.

fell into a sort of ecstasy, which lasted all night. He told Fr. Bellarmine the next morning that this happy night had seemed to pass in a moment. It appears to have been during this ecstasy that God revealed to him the day of his death; for he afterwards assured several persons who visited him that he would die on the Octave of Corpus Christi.

To this interior certainty were now added outward signs of his approaching dissolution. The malady became continually more serious, so that Fr. Vincent Bruno, the Prefect of health, told him there was, humanly speaking, no hope of his recovery. One of his fellow-scholastics soon after visited Aloysius, who received him with the question if he knew what good news he had heard: he was to die within a week, and he begged him to say the Te Deum with him for this grace. To another companion he exclaimed: "Laetantes imus, laetantes imus" (we are going with joy). And it was such a sincere and heartfelt joy that all around him were moved to tears. He now wished to take leave of all to whom he felt himself under special obligation, and dictated short letters to his former novice-master, Fr. John Pescatore, who was at that time Rector of the College in Naples; to Fr. Mutius de Angelis, Professor of Theology at the same College; and to Fr. Bartholomew Recalcati, the Rector of the College in Mantua. He sent word to them that he greeted them with all his heart; that he was now going, as he hoped, to heaven, and recommended himself to their prayers. He had no longer the strength to write his name, but signed with the help of another a cross at the end of the letters.

To his mother also he dictated a last letter:

"Pax Christi! May the grace and consolation of the Holy Ghost be ever with your Ladyship, Your letter

found me still dwelling in the land of the dead; but I am now about to go to praise God for ever in the land of the living. I thought to have made that passage before this; but the violence of the fever abated after the crisis, as I told you in my last letter, and I slowly came to the feast of the Ascension. Since then it has been increasing again, owing to inflammation of the chest, so that I am now going step by step to meet the embrace of the Heavenly Father, on Whose Bosom I hope to rest safely and for ever. Thus the different accounts you have heard about me do not contradict each other, as I have written to tell the Marquis also. Now if charity, as St. Paul says, teaches us to weep with those that weep and rejoice with those who rejoice; then, dear Mother, your joy must be great at the grace that God grants to you in calling me to true joy and giving me the certainty of not being able to lose Him again. I confess to your Ladyship that I am lost and confounded in the contemplation of the Divine Goodness, that boundless and fathomless Ocean, which calls me to eternal rest after such short and trifling labour; which invites and calls me to heaven, to that Sovereign Good which I have sought so negligently, and promises me the fruit of the tears I have shed so sparingly. Take care, dear Mother, not to offend this goodness of God, which you would undoubtedly do if you mourned as dead one who is living in the contemplation of God, where he can assist you by his prayers better than he was able to do here. Our separation will not be for long; we shall meet again in heaven, and rejoice together without fear of separation, for we shall be united with our Redeemer, praising Him with all our strength and extolling His mercy for ever. I do not in the least doubt that we shall easily set aside carnal and earthly considerations, and open our hearts to faith and to that simple, pure obedience which

we owe to God; offering Him, freely and willingly, what already belongs to Him, and this all the more readily, the dearer the gift was to us, in the firm conviction that what God does is for the best. If He takes back what He had given to us, He does so only in order to put it in a safe place out of danger, and to give it all that we would ourselves desire for it. I have said all this only from the desire that your Ladyship and the whole family may take my death as a precious gift of grace, and that you may follow me with your motherly blessing and help me to pass over this gulf and see all my hopes fulfilled on the opposite shore. And I have done so the more gladly because I have nothing else left by which to show you the filial love and reverence which I owe to you. I conclude, and once more humbly beg your blessing.

Rome, June 10th 1591."[1]

Having thus touchingly fulfilled his duty to friends and relatives, Aloysius now thought himself bound to devote himself exclusively to preparation for death. He begged Fr. Anthony Guelfucci, who was his very intimate friend, to come to him every evening. The Father would then place a crucifix on a little table beside the bed, and read to the invalid the seven penitential psalms. Aloysius folded his hands, gazed steadily at the crucifix, remained in deep recollection, and shed abundant tears. When emotion overcame him, the reciter would pause awhile. He was similarly moved when passages from St. Augustine, St. Bernard, or the Psalms were read to him; the 83rd and 121st Psalms were his special favourites.

As it was rumoured that Aloysius would die on the Octave of Corpus Christi, many of his companions sought

---

[1] *Fozzi*, Lettere di S. L. G. 72 ff.

to speak with him alone for a few minutes and recommend to him the affairs of their souls. He received their confidences with cordial sympathy, and promised to deliver all their messages for heaven. He spoke of heaven as though it were his already. Many came and tried to find some excuse for staying, just to enjoy the sight of him; among them the Procurator General, Father Marius Fuccioli, and Fr. Jerome Piatti, who said on leaving his room that Aloysius was a saint, and might be canonised during his life-time. During the last few days of his life Aloysius was constantly rapt in prayer. The crucifix with the Plenary Indulgence for the hour of death was always on his bed, and scarcely left his hands. As the Ritual prescribes, he frequently made acts of faith and longing for heaven. And so the end drew near.

19. Ecce venio.

The 20th of June, the Octave of Corpus Christi, dawned at last, and Br. Mizetti, the second infirmarian, entered the Saint's room in the early morning. Having opened the windows, he said to Aloysius: "To-day is the Octave of Corpus Christi, on which you wished to die. But you seem to me to be better." Aloysius replied that the Octave was not yet over, and that he would die the same day. The Brother went to the first infirmarian, and told him that Aloysius insisted he was going to die that day. Then both of them went to him, and having felt his pulse, assured him that he was better. But Aloysius replied that they were mistaken, and he would die that evening. He then began to beg the Brother to ask Father Rector to bring him the holy Viaticum. The Brother made as though he had not heard the request, for the patient really seemed to be better, and there was no sign of a speedy dissolution being at hand. But Aloysius persisted in his as-

sertion, and repeated it to several Fathers who came to visit him, bidding farewell to each. He passed the day in great tranquillity and recollection; but from time to time he repeated his request for Holy Communion, saying that they surely would not refuse him the Viaticum to strengthen him for his last combat, even though he had communicated on the previous Sunday. In the course of the day the Father Minister surprised him with the news that the Pope had sent him the Apostolic Blessing and Plenary Indulgence. Aloysius did not know whether to be ashamed or glad at such a distinction, and covered his face with both hands. The Father Minister quieted him with the remark that probably his relatives, the Cardinals, had told the Pope of his illness and obtained this favour for him. Towards evening Fr. John Lambertini came from the noviciate-house to visit him. Aloysius begged him also to ask the Rector to bring him the Viaticum. The Father promised to do so, and recited with him the Litany of the Blessed Sacrament. Aloysius responded in a firm, clear voice, and smilingly thanked the Father for this service. At Fr. Lambertini's request, the Rector now entered, and promised to bring the Saint Holy Communion at once. At the sound of the bell all the inmates of the house assembled, and accompanied the Blessed Sacrament to the invalid's room. As the Father Rector pronounced the words: "Receive, dear brother, the Viaticum, the Body of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and may He preserve your soul to eternal life", none of those present could restrain their tears. Aloysius alone was full of devotion, joy, and exultation at the happiness of going so soon to see and enjoy unveiled Him, Whom he now saw and received under the veil of the Eucharist. After receiving the Viaticum he wished to take leave of all, and each one had to approach his bed and embrace him. How many tears fell

upon his face, and how many eyes turned again for a last glance and greeting! Aloysius recommended himself to their prayers, and especially begged the professors of theology to ask their students to pray for him; and he on his part promised to pray for them all in heaven. One of his companions who was very intimate with him found an opportunity to say a few words to him in private, and begged him to help him in the spiritual life when he was in heaven, as he had shown him such brotherly kindness here below. Aloysius said he would certainly remember him there, where charity is truer and fuller. He said all this in such a firm, clear voice that no one thought his death was near. The Provincial, Fr. John Carminata, also came to visit him, and asked him how he was. "I am going, Father, I am going", he replied. "And where?" asked the Provincial. "To heaven, if my sins do not hinder me." The Provincial said in a low voice to some who were present: "Just listen, he talks of death as if it were a walk to Frascati." A Father who was standing near raised Aloysius' head a little and showed him the Crucifix. Aloysius quickly took off his nightcap, and as the Father wished to replace it on his head, saying that the evening air might do him harm, he replied: "Our Saviour also died bare-headed." When the Angelus bell rang the room was still full, and as the infirmarian wished to air it a little, the Rector ordered all to retire. The question now arose, who should pass the night with Aloysius, and he himself named two Fathers, the Father Minister, Nicholas Fabrini, and Fr. Anthony Guelfucci. Fr. Rector sent all the others to bed, saying that Aloysius had strength enough to live for a week yet. So they all retired, but sadly and with heavy hearts. Fr. Bellarmine, Aloysius' confessor, turned to the infirmarian and asked if there was any fear of a speedy end, as in that case he

would not go. But the Brother answered that Aloysius was as little likely to die that night as the Father himself; he should go to rest, and if any change occurred he would call him.

"I remained, then", writes Fr. Anthony Guelfucci, "with Aloysius, and thought that he would now rest awhile, since he had taken some nourishment after receiving the Holy Viaticum. So I covered the lamp with a shade, and only went to the bedside now and then to see if, as he had said, the end was really coming. But I always found him awake and engaged in prayer. Two or three times I asked him if he wanted anything, and he always answered: 'Keep watch over me; I am dying.' Although I saw no signs of the last agony as yet, I felt uneasy, and debated whether to tell the Father Minister to begin the prayers for the dying. At last I went to the bedside again to make sure, and asked Aloysius if I could do anything for him. He begged me to lay him on the left side instead of on the right. I saw now that the end was near, and called Father Minister, who was saying his breviary in the next room. He came in, accompanied by the infirmarian, and by the light of our candles we saw that the Saint's face was overspread by a deadly pallor and cold sweat, the sign of approaching death. I told him that he had asked me to move him to another position, and I would gladly do so, but there was danger lest it might cause immediate death; and I begged Aloysius to be patient and drink this last drop of the chalice of suffering. He assented quite readily." [1]

The Fathers, seeing that Aloysius no longer spoke or moved, now put the blessed candle into his hand; he grasped it and held it fast, listened attentively to the prayers recited for him, gazed intently at the Crucifix

[1] Bolland. 1017 E. F.

opposite to him, and pressed to his breast the smaller one, to which the plenary indulgence was attached. Once more he slightly moved his lips, breathed the Name of Jesus, and gave up his soul to God.

Aloysius died quietly, in full possession of his faculties, and with rather unexpected suddenness at the last, so that Fr. Bellarmine, to his great regret, could not be called. It was between ten and eleven o'clock in the night between Thursday, the 20th, and Friday, the 21st of June, at the close of the Octave of Corpus Christi and near the beginning of the day on which, later on, the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus was to be celebrated. The Saint had always prayed to die on a Friday or during the Octave of Corpus Christi. He was twenty-three years, three months, and eleven days old at the time of his death.

Death is not merely the end, but the result, the echo, and the reflection of life. This holy life ended with a holy death. His favourite devotions — to the Blessed Sacrament and to the Passion of Our Lord — and favourite virtues — prayer, mortification, and penance — hallowed his death and also set their seal upon it. On laying out his body, the infirmarians found on the right side two deep wounds from having lain in that position so long; the linen had sunk into the flesh. Aloysius had never breathed a word about this, but had carefully concealed it all. It was the pain of these wounds that had made him ask to be moved just before his death. This slight alleviation was not to be his, and so he died like Our Saviour on His Cross, quietly and full of resignation.

PART III.

THE SAINT IN HEAVEN.

Heaven is the goal, the prize, and the completion of holiness. But the activity of the Saints does not cease with death. Celestial bliss is not merely a delightful repose in God, but also a mighty exercise of exterior power upon earth by graces and miracles, which testify that the Saint lives with God, and by which he replies to the voices of veneration, confidence, and love which mount up to him from this world. Thus the glory of heaven is woven of divers threads, blissful rest and wonderful activity forming, as it were, a halo of glory here below and in the world above, around the body and soul of the Blessed.

1. The Mortal Remains of the Departed Spirit.

Aloysius' lifeless body lay upon its humble bed, a picture of rest and peace. Scarcely had his glorious soul taken flight, when the veneration of his earthly remains began. Fr. Anthony Guelfucci, the witness of his last moments, did not venture to touch the body of the Saint, out of veneration for him; but he immediately took possession of what little he had left behind — a few pens and two little pictures from his study-table. In the early morning, as soon as the Saint's death became known, the room was soon filled with Fathers who came to pray at his side. Everyone tried to obtain some little relic of Aloysius, and

by degrees everything imaginable disappeared — locks of his hair, strips of his habit, linen, prayer-books and written papers; even the body itself was not entirely spared.

In the course of the morning it was placed on a bier in the private chapel of the College, where it was constantly surrounded by a close circle of visitors, especially of his younger companions, who kissed his hands lovingly and familiarly; among them even some who had hitherto shrunk from even seeing a corpse. In the evening the open coffin was brought into the hall, and here the inmates of the house filed past it, everyone kissing his hand in passing, although this is not the custom except with a deceased priest. From the hall the coffin was carried in procession to the Church of the Annunziata, where the Office of the Dead was recited, during which an extraordinary concourse of people assembled. All pressed forward to get near the body, to touch and kiss it, and to try to obtain some relic. Among others was noticed a little group of young students, some of them from families of the first rank, such as Pernstein, Dietrichstein, Orsini etc. They entered the church by a side-door, made a regular charge towards the body, and tried by means of scissors and penknives to secure relics of some kind. Young De Angelis was just about to cut off an ear, when happily a Father who hurried up succeeded in dispersing the impetuous throng. In the tumult and confusion one of the young religious actually succeeded in cutting off a finger of the right hand — a piece of daring for which he had afterwards to do severe penance. The crowding and violence became at last so excessive that the people had to be forcibly driven back and the church doors closed. The burial had to take place at night [1].

[1] Bolland. 1021 E.

Fr. Bellarmine and other influential Fathers were of opinion that, on account of the sanctity of Aloysius and the events that might be expected to follow, his body ought not to be interred in the vault without a coffin, as was usually done, but to be placed in a wooden coffin. The Father General assented to this proposal, and so the Saint was buried in a coffin in the Chapel of the Crucifix in the Church of the Annunziata.

There he rested for nearly seven years, until the 22nd of January 1598. An overflow of the Tiber, which flooded the vaults of the Church of the Annunziata, occasioned the General, Fr. Acquaviva, to have the coffin taken up and opened. The flesh was found to have decayed, but the bones were entire, and exactly in the position in which they had been interred; the head was slightly bent forward on the breast, as Aloysius was wont to carry it. The Provincial, Fr. Bernardine Rossignoli, distributed on this occasion a considerable number of relics, and thus portions of the bones were carried by Fr. Nicholas Lancisius to Poland, and by Fr. Francis Corso to India. The College at Brussels received a shoulder-blade of the Saint, part of which was afterwards sent to Antwerp [1]. After the examination of the remains and removal of these relics the rest were again enclosed in a small coffin and placed in the same vault, but higher up in the wall, in order that they might not be injured by damp and water or mingled with other remains.

As the veneration of the Saint continued to increase, on account of the many miracles wrought by his intercession, Fr. Acquaviva had the remains removed again on the 8th of June 1602, in order to deposit them in a more fitting resting-place. The little wooden coffin was placed

[1] Ib. 1026 E.

in another of lead, and this again enclosed in a wooden coffin and laid under the predella of the altar in the Chapel of St. Sebastian, in the same Church. Although this translation was to be kept secret, the spot became known nevertheless, and the people thronged in great numbers to the Altar of St. Sebastian, where the body reposed.

The third translation took place at the request of the Marquis Francis Gonzaga, a younger brother of Aloysius. Since he deemed the place where the relics had been deposited too lowly, they were again removed on the 13th of May 1605, and placed in the Lady Chapel of the same Church, in a niche in the wall on the Gospel side. On this occasion Prince Francis received a shin-bone of the Saint, which he took to Castiglione as a precious treasure, and of which a portion was afterwards given to the Church of Sasso in Valtellina, where Aloysius worked an exceptional number of miracles. The head of the Saint was at first given by Father General Acquaviva to the Professed House at the Gesù, but afterwards also handed over to the Saint's brother for the Church of the Jesuit College at Castiglione, where it is still venerated.

The relics were translated a fourth time on the 15th of June 1620, when a special chapel in honour of the Saint was erected and consecrated in the College Church. One of the acolytes who carried torches in the solemn procession on this occasion was a young Belgian Jesuit named John Berchmans, who was studying philosophy at the Roman College. Even then he was already called a second Aloysius [1], and imitated his virtues so gloriously that in the course of time an altar was erected to him in the same Church, opposite to that of St. Aloysius.

---

[1] Bolland. 1028 F.

On the 2nd of August 1626, four years after the canonisation of the Founder of the Society of Jesus, Cardinal Louis Ludovisi solemnly laid the foundation-stone of the new Church of St. Ignatius, which was to be built on the site of the old Church of the Annunziata. This circumstance occasioned a fifth translation of the relics of St. Aloysius, which took place on the 5th of August 1649. The Saint was now deposited in the second chapel on the right-hand side, which was dedicated to St. Joseph, and built on the site of the room in which Aloysius died. There the relics lay for 50 years under the altar. There is still in this chapel of St. Joseph a picture and an inscription stating that Aloysius died there.

In the meantime the building of the church was progressing; in memory of the old Church of the Annunziata the altar of Our Lady was placed in a chapel of the transept, on the left, and opposite to this, on the right, a new and magnificent chapel was dedicated to St. Aloysius. Thither the holy relics were carried in procession, headed by the General, Fr. Thyrsus Gonzalez, and deposited under the altar on the 20th of December 1699. This was the sixth and last translation, and there the sacred remains rest to this day.

The Jesuit College at Palermo obtained possession of the lower jaw-bone of the Saint; Cologne received the crucifix that he had used during his life and at his death. It was presented by Cardinal Lugo to General Goswin Nickel, who bequeathed the treasure to the College at Cologne on the 26th of May 1661.

God did not grant to the body of St. Aloysius the gift of incorruption, as He has done to so many other bodies of Saints, although this is generally regarded as a special reward for untarnished chastity. One would have thought that this distinction also ought surely to have fallen to the

lot of Aloysius, on account of his extraordinary purity and virginal modesty. But God is unsearchable in the distribution of His gifts and favours. Perhaps, in His Providence, He intended by the dissolution of the sacred body to grant to many places the honour and blessings bestowed by the presence of his relics. In point of fact, they have been distributed so liberally that now-a-days no more are given away. The history of this sacred body is a triumph constantly increasing in honour and glory. From the damp vault of the Chapel of the Crucifix it mounts to the chapel of St. Sebastian, thence to those of Our Lady and St. Joseph; and having received from them all the honours of hospitality, it rests in its own Chapel, which vies in splendour and costliness with the tomb of any other Saint in the Eternal City. "The Lord keepeth all the bones of the just" (Ps. xxxiii. 21). "Your bones shall flourish like an herb" (Is. lxvi. 14).

2. The Great Thaumaturgus.

Miracles are the visible rays of holiness, which play not only around the relics of the Saints after their death, but often around their footsteps during life. Aloysius worked no miracles during his life on earth. Those who knew him intimately wondered at this, but consoled themselves with the reflection that he himself was the greatest miracle. God is inscrutable also in His ways of rewarding His Saints. But scarcely was Aloysius dead when the stream of miraculous power burst forth in a very torrent of graces, which has never yet ceased to flow, so that he justly merits the title of a great wonder-worker. In his miracles and extraordinary favours three special characteristics are noticeable: amiability, manifold variety, and astonishing abundance. The following details may serve to illustrate this.

The first miraculous cure worked by Aloysius was that of his own dear mother. Soon after his death troubles began again among his nearest relatives. As already related, his uncle, Don Alphonsus of Castel Goffredo, had promised Aloysius to leave his fief to Rudolph, although the latter had rejected his only daughter Catherine and married Helen Aliprandi [1]. But Don Alphonsus afterwards repented of this resolve, and he took steps to obtain the Emperor's consent to settle the fief upon his daughter, to the exclusion of Rudolph. Soon after this Don Alphonsus was murdered at his villa of Gambaredolo by eight men from Castiglione [2]. Rudolph marched to Castel Goffredo with a band of armed men, and took forcible possession. But he was not to enjoy his property long. Not two years after Aloysius' death, on the 3rd of January 1593, he himself was shot down by the vassals of Don Alphonsus at Castel Goffredo, while entering the church with his wife [3]. Unhappily he had fallen under an accusation (said to have been false) of having coined false Papal money, and having thus incurred excommunication, could not be buried with the rites of the Church. But the entreaties and tears of his mother prevailed with the Pope, and he gave permission for Rudolph to be buried with all the last honours [4]. He was interred in the Castle chapel at Castiglione. These terrible events grieved his poor mother very deeply;

[1] Cf. above, p. 205.

[2] *Rittershusii* Duces Mantuae, tab. B. Catherine afterwards married Prince Theodore Trivultio, whose son, Cardinal Theodore Trivultio, represented the Emperor Ferdinand II. in negotiating with Pope Urban VIII. for the canonisation of Aloysius. Bolland. 886 F.

[3] Vita delle ven. Sorelle Cinzia, Olympia, Gridonia Gonzaga. *P. Venturi,* Rome 1881, p. 10.

[4] Eco di S. L. 1891, No. 18, p. 2. *Rittershusii* Duces Mantuae tab. B.

she became dangerously ill, and having received the Last Sacraments, awaited the end. The whole family was assembled round her bed, when suddenly she opened her eyes, and her countenance brightened with heavenly joy. A sweet smile transfigured the dying features, and she burst into a flood of tears, although she had long been unable to weep, as though benumbed with pain and grief. What had happened? Her Aloysius, her heavenly child, stood before her surrounded by celestial glory, and cured her by a glance. She rose at once, full of hope and confidence that a happy future was in store for her family [1]. And her hopes were not disappointed; for the Marquis Francis soon raised it again to high honour and influence, just as Aloysius had predicted.

Cynthia Gonzaga, a daughter of Rudolph, who was a nun in Castiglione, was cured of heart disease in 1668 by simply touching the picture of Aloysius [2]. Another of his nieces, Joan, the daughter of his brother Francis, was saved by him in imminent danger of death in a carriage accident, in the year 1674. She had been on a pilgrimage to the famous church of her sainted uncle at Sasso, in the valley of Valtellina, when the carriage overturned and fell down the precipitous bank of the Addo. Her attendants hurried breathless to the help of their mistress, though giving her up for lost. But they found her sitting beside the carriage and horses with her pet dog, close to the river's edge. Only the roof of the carriage had been broken off. Joan had recommended herself while falling to Our Lady and to her holy uncle, and it seemed to her that an invisible hand gently supported her as she fell to the ground [3]. Aloysius appeared also to his sister-in-law,

[1] Bolland. 1038 D.
[2] Ib. 1062 F.
[3] Ib. 1086 D.

Helen Aliprandi, who had married after Rudolph's death Claud Gonzaga di Borgoforte [1], and always had a great devotion to the Saint. A week before she died, in the year 1608, he came to predict to her her death [2]. Aloysius twice cured his relative, Duke Vincent of Mantua, of violent gout in the foot, simply by the touch of his relics [3]. Nor did he forget his faithful old servants in the distribution of his heavenly benefits. His old nurse, Camilla Ferrari, suffered severely for eight years from consumption. She had his picture brought and fastened to the curtains of her bed, reminded him trustfully of all the care she had lavished on him as a child, vowed to offer a silver heart in thanksgiving, and suddenly found herself cured [4]. In the year 1606 the Saint rendered a great service to his old valet Ghizoni, who had since then been made Majordomo to Prince Francis, and was then with the Marquis at Rome. He one day found himself short of 500 ducats in his accounts, and could not account for the deficiency. The old man was in a terrible state of anxiety, and recommended himself in prayer to his dearly-loved former master, reminding him of the faithful service he had rendered him. On awaking in the morning, Ghizoni seemed to hear distinctly a voice telling him to look at the steward's account, and he would find what he sought. He did so immediately, and found that the sum was entered there as received and paid out. He hastened at once to the tomb of the Saint and heard Mass there in thanksgiving [5]. Ghizoni testified to having been marvellously helped after praying to the Saint on another occasion also, but refused to give particulars of it. Thus Aloysius showed

---

[1] *Rittershusii* Duces Mantuae, tab. F.

[2] Bolland. 1156 B. [3] Ib. 1048 B. C.

[4] Ib. 1056 F. [5] Ib. 1063 C.

himself exceptionally gracious and helpful to his relatives and acquaintances now that he was in heaven, although according to human judgment he had so neglected them here below.

It is a proverbial joke in the Society of Jesus, that the Jesuit Saints will rather help anyone else than their own brethren in religion. But Aloysius seems to be an exception. He showed himself most fraternally solicitous and helpful towards them. A lay-brother in Rome contracted a disease of the knee, which hindered him from kneeling to say his prayers as Aloysius had done. This greatly troubled the Brother, and made him feel ashamed. He had recourse to Aloysius, full of confidence, urgently reminded him how fond he had always been of the lay-brothers, and begged him to help him, promising to say an Our Father and a Hail Mary in his honour every day. He was instantly cured. This occurred in the year 1609 [1]. In Padua Aloysius cured a novice, Mark Gussoni, who had already received the Last Sacraments [2]; in Rome a scholastic, John Giustiniani [3]; in Ghent, in 1632, Fr. William Flack [4]. Even the Father General Francis Retz owed his life to Aloysius (1736), and therefore became a zealous promoter of the honour of his benefactor. It was he who obtained permission for a special Mass and Office of the Saint for the whole Society, and also a plenary indulgence for each of the so-called Six Sundays of St. Aloysius. Very extraordinary was the cure of the scholastic Aloysius Spinelli at the College of Palermo, in 1635. He was suffering from speechlessness and complete paralysis of the limbs. Aloysius appeared to him several times, and restored to him first the power of speech and afterwards

[1] Bolland. 1061 E. [2] Ib. 1043 F. [3] Ib. 1045 E.
[4] Ib. 1075 B. C.

the use of his limbs. But he imposed somewhat hard conditions. Spinelli was to make the long Exercises of St. Ignatius, to pray for a quarter-of-an-hour longer every day than he had hitherto done, and on Sundays for half-an-hour longer; and also to fast on the vigil of St. Aloysius' feast. Aloysius revealed to him that he was to have been dumb for the rest of his life, but that God, in order to make known to everyone the merits of the Saint, had permitted him to cure him. He then bade Spinelli use his tongue for the glory of God, and strive after perfection more zealously than hitherto, for God expected great things of him; but he should be of good courage, for he — Aloysius — would help and guide him. St. John Berchmans also appeared with Aloysius to Spinelli, who afterwards went on the mission to the Philippines [1]. The cure of the novice Nicholas Celestini in Rome was also attended by several very remarkable circumstances. He had been brought by a complication of diseases to the very verge of the grave, in the year 1765. St. Aloysius appeared to him just as he is represented in the picture over the altar in the Church of St. Ignatius, but radiant with heavenly beauty and glory. He asked the invalid what he desired, health or death. As the sick man answered that he desired what God willed, Aloysius replied that, since he was so resigned to the Will of God, he should live; but he must strive after perfection, propagate the devotion to the Sacred Heart, which was so well-pleasing to God, and keep the Six Sundays of St. Aloysius. Encouraged by this favour, Nicholas asked also to be freed from the headaches he constantly suffered. "That is not God's Will", replied the Saint; "I wish you to be constantly reminded by this pain of the Passion of Christ,

[1] Ib. 1075 ff.

as I in my life also desired to suffer the same pain, in order to have a share in the Passion of my Lord, who suffered so much for me." Thereupon the Saint blessed the sick man, and disappeared [1]. Thus we see, Aloysius treated his brethren fraternally, but with firmness.

Among the miracles worked by Aloysius for strangers, the cure of the Carmelite nun, Catherine de Carlinis (April 8th 1600), who lived in the same convent as St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi, and suffered from a painful cancer, is especially celebrated. The Life of the Saint which Fr. Cepari had given the nuns to read, and probably also the famous vision of St. Aloysius' glory in heaven, which had been granted to St. Mary Magdalen a few days before, gave the sick nun courage and confidence, and the application of the Saint's relic sufficed to make the pain completely cease. The Superioress, however, decided to let the surgeons remove the cancer. But the Sister begged the Saint to manifest his glory by completing the cure. At the same instant she felt such a violent pain that she fainted, and was completely cured. This is the first of the miracles examined and attested by the Church before the beatification of Aloysius [2]. The cure of Philibert Baronis in Turin is remarkable, because it affords us a glimpse of the exterior appearance of the Saint. Baronis, who was suffering from kidney disease, saw in his sleep a young religious of the Society of Jesus, somewhat above medium height, with a pale face and rather long, slightly curved nose. This youth placed a girdle round his loins, and all pain vanished [3]. Julia de Nobilis, a Florentine lady, was attacked by a return of an old malady on Maundy Thursday 1607, while attending Divine service in the Jesuit Church. The attack was so sudden

---

[1] *Cepari* (Edit. 1862) 272 ff.

[2] Bolland. 1043 A ff. [3] Ib. 1044 C.

and so violent, that she thought herself dying, and there was quite a commotion among those around her. In her fear and distress she invoked St. Aloysius, whose picture hung opposite to her, and begged him by the great love he had for the Annunziata to help her. It was just at the Elevation, and suddenly she felt quite well, and was able to go home alone [1]. Flaminius Bacci, assistant to the Secretary of the Congregation of Rites, suffered from a malignant fever, attended with deafness and dizziness. He read the life of the Saint, and begged him with great confidence to lay his hands on him and heal him. At the same instant he felt his face and head embraced by a hand. The pressure was so strong that his nose was slightly bent, and he noticed a very sweet odour, but saw no one. He then fell into a refreshing slumber, and awoke completely cured [2]. In Campoli, near Ascoli, a boy of seven years had been drowned in a torrent. They carried him home and anointed his body with oil from the lamp that burned before the tomb of St. Aloysius in Rome, and the boy returned to life and ran about, quite well [3]. A beggar in Rome who was suffering from fever and dysentery could not obtain admittance to any hospital. On his way to ask at the one on the Cœline Hill he came to the Church of the Annunziata, entered, and promised St. Aloysius to beg until he had collected a ducat and then offer it to him. He had not yet reached the hospital, when he was cured [4].

In spiritual diseases also many were helped by Aloysius. Several were cured of possession by his intercession [5], and others were converted from heresy to the Catholic Church [6].

---

[1] Bolland. 1059 B. [2] Ib. 1048 F.
[3] Ib. 1084 F. [4] Ib. 1047 F.
[5] Ib. 1049 C. 1110 A. 1111 F.
[6] Ib. 1116 C.

A great sensation was made in Parma by the sudden conversion of an unfaithful wife, who made a vow to the Saint, abandoned her sinful habits, and died a pious death [1]. Many others who had been for years the victims not only of temptations against purity, but even of sinful habits, were freed from them after making some little vow to the Saint [2].

Aloysius worked these and countless other miracles and answers to prayer in various ways: sometimes when simply invoked, sometimes through the touch of one of his relics, through the veneration of his picture, and very often by the use of oil from lamps that burned in his honour; and all this not only in Italy, but also in Belgium, France, Spain, Poland, Germany — in fact everywhere that the fame of his holiness had penetrated. In Germany especially he healed many poor students of diseases of the eyes [3]. In Italy the places specially blessed by miraculous favours of the Saint were the Marquisate of Castiglione, Florence, and the valley known as the Valtellina. In the latter district the biography of the Saint had been widely read, and had gradually awakened among the people very great confidence in his intercession. Soon a church in his honour was built at Sasso, and consecrated by the Cardinal-Archbishop Frederick Borromeo. Up to the year 1630 more than 100 miracles had been authenticated there; in Castiglione, up to the year 1606, 70 miracles and 300 miraculous answers to prayer, in token of which ex-voto offerings were hung up in the church before the picture of the Saint [4]. The biographer of the Saint, Fr. Cepari, knew of no less than 206 authenticated miracles; many

---

[1] Bolland. 1052 C.
[2] Ib. 1071 C. 1055 F. 1050 F.
[3] Ib. 1057 B. 1088 ff. [4] Ib. 1056 E.

others were not officially attested, because already an abundance of them had been proved, more than were needed for the process of his beatification [1]. Indeed, Aloysius' miraculous power still manifests itself at the present day [2].

We will conclude this chapter by mentioning a miracle that is of special interest, not merely because it is still renewed every year, but because of its exact similarity to another miracle of world-wide renown. Credible witnesses testify that the Venerable Servant of God Don Placid Bacher received as a legacy from a lady named Raffaelle Gaudiello a relic of St. Aloysius, consisting of a little bottle containing congealed blood. The relic is traced to a silversmith of Castiglione, named Giaparelli, who received it from an unnamed French General as a present, in acknowledgment of some well-executed work. However that may be, the relic came into the possession of Don Placid in the year 1837, and afterwards passed to the Church in Naples known as the Gesù vecchio. Little as is known about the origin and history of the relic, the miracle that year by year attests its genuineness is most wonderful. From the first Vespers of the Feast of St. Aloysius till the second Vespers of the Octave the blood in the little bottle becomes fluid and of a fresh red colour. The relic is then usually placed on the altar of St. Aloysius, and the miracle takes place without its being touched, after a few prayers have been recited before the picture of the Saint. Sometimes the blood liquefies unexpectedly at other times of the year as well, and we are assured by our informant — an eye-witness — that this occurs frequently. So we have here a second example of the miracle of St. Januarius, though not so well-known as the latter. But

---

[1] *Narbone,* Dieci glorie di S. Luigi Gonzaga 84.

[2] Ib. 221. ff.

the Neapolitans know it well, and throng in crowds to witness the miracle and venerate the relic, when the time of the liquefaction arrives [1].

Thus the quiet, retiring Aloysius has become a great wonder-worker and benefactor of humanity. His father opposed his joining the Society, because he wished to retain for his subjects a good and wise master. But could Aloysius have done as much for his subjects — could he have become what he now is to the whole world, if he had remained in the world? He has shown himself a father not only to his native land, but to all Christian countries. He burned with a noble desire of doing good to men in body and soul, in order thus to glorify God. How generously God has fulfilled his wish, in letting him become a source of blessing for all mankind! As a temporal sovereign he had only temporal means at his disposal; but now he plays with the tokens of God's omnipotence and directs streams of His beneficence and mercy to the whole world. His virginal hand casts down into the abysses of misery, sin, and corruption of this earthly life blessings that purify, reconcile, vivify, and console all. In truth, nations and kings put their trust under the covert of his wings (Ps. xxxv. 8).

3. Beloved by God and Men.

There are three causes at the root of the veneration paid to the Saints here below. The first and principal of

---

[1] *Narbone,* Dieci glorie di S. Luigi Gonzaga 225. Ricordo del terzo centenario della morte di S. L. G. per *Giovanni Finizio,* Napoli 1891, 33—35. The above details of the history of the relic were communicated to the author of this "Life" in a letter by the above-named Don Finizio, Rector of the Church of the Gesù vecchio.

these causes is the Spirit of God, Who gently but powerfully guides everything to the great end of His own glorification. According to His inscrutable counsels, He directs the attention of the faithful to the Saints, arouses love and confidence in them, justifies this confidence by answers to prayer and by miracles, which He works at the intercession of the Saints and confirms by the infallible authority of the Church. The faithful themselves are the second cause. God always makes use of the believing people to obtain from the supreme authority of the Church the approbation for public veneration and the honours of the Church for the Saints. The third cause, lastly, is the Pope. He confirms the legality of the veneration, ratifies the genuineness of the miracles, and determines the degree of ecclesiastical honours to be paid to the blessed servants of God. Thus it was also in Aloysius' case.

The veneration paid to him at his funeral was only the harbinger of greater honours. Everyone recommended himself to his intercession. The Masses prescribed by the rules were offered in the various houses of the Society, but rather to thank God for the extraordinary graces He had bestowed upon Aloysius than to obtain the repose of his soul. The Fathers never tired of speaking of him and reviewing his holy life, during their recreations. Even in the sermons delivered to the inmates of the houses of the Society his virtues were frequently alluded to, especially on the anniversary of his death. For several days after his death there was a continual stream of people to the door of the College, all eager to obtain some relic of him [1]. And not a day passed without his grave being visited and adorned with flowers by his brethren in religion [2].

---

[1] Bolland. 1020 C.

[2] Ib. 1015 C. F.

Several letters were written to Castiglione to tell Aloysius' mother of her son's holy death, and all offered her the brief but sweet message of consolation that she might think herself happy to have a son in heaven, for this was the general opinion in Rome. The Father General Acquaviva, Fr. Bernardine Rossignoli, Rector of the College, the Cardinals Della Rovere and Scipio Gonzaga, and Eleanor of Austria, the widowed Duchess of Mantua, all wrote to her to this effect. Thomas Mancini, the Secretary of Cardinal Della Rovere, told her how the garments of the dead Saint had been pilfered; he added that as yet no miracles had occurred, or at any rate they were kept secret, but his biography was to be written at once.

Some celebrated men who were especially fond of Aloysius did a great deal by their influence to promote and propagate the veneration of the Saint. The first of these was Cardinal Cæsar Baronius. He very frequently visited Aloysius' resting-place, prayed there for a long time, and never tired of kissing the tomb. "A Saint, a Saint", he would repeat, on quitting the spot. A relic of St. Aloysius was given to him; he received it kneeling, and reverently touched his head with it. The last walk but one he took was to visit the Saint's tomb once more. He came supported by two servants, and on leaving cried out: "O St. Aloysius, pray for me!" A few days after he was himself in the next world.

But still greater veneration was shown to Aloysius by Fr. Robert Bellarmine, who had been his director during the latter part of his life, and had stated even while he was yet living that he was confirmed in grace, and he only wondered that he did not work miracles. He confidently declared that Aloysius had gone straight to heaven immediately after his death, and therefore advised that his body should be buried in a separate place, since he was

convinced that the holiness of the dead youth would at some time be attested by miracles. When Fr. Bellarmine was afterwards raised to the dignity of a Cardinal, he became the most zealous promoter of his former penitent's beatification. At the consultation of the Congregation of Rites (1612), which had to report to the Pope concerning the process, Bellarmine spoke first, extolled the Saint's innocence, austerity of life, and miracles, concluding by saying that all the Saints had sanctified themselves either by innocence or by penance, but Aloysius by both. In the course of the process at Rome he bore a magnificent testimony to the miracles, and recounted not less than thirty-one that had been worked instantaneously by Aloysius [1]. In a letter to Fr. Cepari he mentions five privileges by which God had distinguished Aloysius. The first was freedom from mortal sin; the second, the holiness of his life from his seventh year upwards; the third, his immunity from any temptation against purity; the fourth, his freedom from any distraction in prayer; and the fifth, his model obedience, humility, mortification, abstinence, prudence, piety, and purity. Bellarmine adds that, since he had always regarded it as certain that Aloysius had gone straight to heaven after his death, he had a scruple about praying for the repose of his soul, but had on the contrary recommended himself daily to the Saint's intercession [2]. In the year 1608, on the anniversary of Aloysius' death, Cardinal Bellarmine preached a sermon in the Roman College. Having first spoken about the qualities and motives of humility, he went on to point out the example given by St. Aloysius with regard to this virtue. He said that Aloysius had practised humility first by his faith — especially in the presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament — and con-

[1] Bolland. 888 E. 889 A. [2] Ib. 1037 C. D. E.

tempt of all earthly possessions; secondly by his distrust of himself, which led him to flee all dangers; thirdly by his obedience; fourthly by his patience; fifthly by his self-abasement. God therefore had exalted him and already, as so many miracles testified, admitted him to the Beatific Vision. He ended with the memorable words, that after St. Ignatius and St. Francis Xavier no one in the Society of Jesus, in which so many holy men and even martyrs had lived, had been so glorified by miraculous manifestations of Divine power as this youth; and that probably God had distinguished him thus in order to encourage young students to strive after Christian perfection, and to teach them that any age may be ripe enough to reach it in its highest degree and enjoy union with God [1]. Bellarmine honoured Aloysius not merely by words but by deeds also. On every anniversary of his death he visited his tomb, and then went to the room where he had died, and where he had so often held spiritual conversations with him and waited upon him. He did not long allow this hallowed room to be used as an ordinary infirmary, but obtained permission to transform it into a chapel and raise an altar on the spot where this innocent victim had ended his life. He himself bore the expense of erecting and adorning the sanctuary, on the walls of which were pictures representing scenes from the life of the Saint. And even after his death Bellarmine wished not to be parted from Aloysius, and therefore expressed in his will a desire to be buried at Aloysius' feet, if his superiors thought fit. But they ordered that the remains of the venerable Cardinal should be interred in the grave where the body of St. Ignatius had rested for a time [2].

---

[1] Bolland. 1150—1153.

[2] Ib. 889 B. C. E.

Besides this celebrated Prince of the Church there was also a great Saint who became the herald of Aloysius' holiness during her own life-time. This was St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi, of the Carmelite Convent of St. Mary of the Angels in Florence. As has been observed already, the Convent had become acquainted through Fr. Cepari with the saintly life of Aloysius, and had also obtained through his mediation a relic of the Saint. On the 4th of April 1606 St. Mary Magdalen fell into an ecstasy, during which she exclaimed: "O how great is the glory enjoyed by Aloysius, the son of Ignatius! Never would I have believed it, if Jesus had not shown it to me. It seems to me that there can be none greater in heaven. I assure you, Aloysius is a great Saint. We have Saints (relics) in our church (the Carmelite) who do not possess such glory. Would that I could go through the whole world and proclaim that Aloysius, the son of Ignatius, is a great Saint, and show everyone his glory, that God might be glorified! Aloysius has such glory because he led an interior life. Who can tell the worth and importance of the interior life! There can be no comparison between it and exterior actions. Aloysius gave ear during his life on earth to the inspirations of the Word, and that is why his glory is so great. Aloysius was an unknown martyr. O my God! Whoever knows Thee, Who art so great and so infinitely worthy of love, suffers a great martyrdom, because he cannot love Thee as he desires to love, and because Thou art not beloved, but even offended by Thy creatures. Aloysius made himself a martyr. O how he loved God when on earth! And therefore he now possesses Him in the perfect fulness of love. Here on earth his ejaculatory prayers of love and union with God were as arrows with which he pierced the Heart of the Divine Word and kept his mind fixed upon It; now in heaven these arrows return

again to his own heart, because he now really possesses and enjoys the union that he merited by these acts of love."[1] These words of St. Mary Magdalen, and the news of the miracle worked by Aloysius four days later upon Sister de Carlinis, spread through all Europe on the wings of the wind.

In consequence of the miracles that occurred everywhere, the veneration of the Saint increased from year to year. The first three decades of the 17th century and the pontificates of Clement VIII. (1592—1605) and Paul V. (1605—1621) were especially rich in honour and glory for Aloysius, being marked by his beatification and a series of the most brilliant celebrations.

Under Clement VIII., in the year 1603, Fr. Virgil Cepari began the ecclesiastical process of inquiry into the miracles that had taken place in the dioceses of Northern Italy. On the 12th of May in the following year, 1604, the Diocesan Synod of clergy at Mantua, under the presidency of Bishop Francis Gonzaga (the former Franciscan) presented a petition to Pope Clement for the beatification of the holy youth, on account of the general veneration for him and the many miracles he had worked. This brilliant assembly gave occasion to the issue of pictures of Aloysius, bearing the title of the "Blessed", and votive tablets in thanksgiving for benefits received were sent to Rome to his tomb; but, out of caution, they were not exposed there[2], although these marks of honour were permissible at that time with the consent of the Bishop of the diocese. The diocese of Brescia celebrated in this same year no less than two feasts in honour of Aloysius, who had been a native of the diocese. The first of these celebrations consisted in a magnificent demonstration by the students of

[1] Bolland. 1037 F. [2] Ib. 867 D.

Brescia, and was held on the 21st of June. This was the first students' celebration in honour of the Saint who was to become their patron. The young orator who pronounced the panegyric, a student named Ottavio Spinola, had worked himself into such enthusiasm over the beauty of his topic, that he himself entered the Society of Jesus and induced many of his hearers to join other religious Orders. With the permission of the Bishop of Brescia, the picture of Aloysius was exposed for public veneration in the Collegiate Church at Castiglione, in the presence of an immense concourse of people. This second celebration took place on the 28th of July. Foremost among the people who had thronged from all parts was the old Marchioness, his mother, who knelt immediately in front of the picture. What an unspeakable happiness for this pious mother's heart, to see her son's picture over the altar, and to hear his panegyric from the lips of a celebrated Dominican, Fr. Sylvester Ugolotti! She could not hope to see such another day in this life. On the 3rd of April in the following year she peacefully breathed her last, and was interred first in the Church of the Brothers Minor, Santa Maria, and afterwards in the sanctuary of the Collegiate Church [1].

In the meantime a nobleman had arrived in Rome who was destined to contribute greatly to the veneration of Aloysius. This was the Marquis Francis Gonzaga, who had returned from the Court of Prague some time before, and had assumed the government of the Marquisate after Rudolph's death. Although scarcely 27 years of age, he was sent to Rome as Imperial Ambassador, and had his first audience of Clement VIII. on the 5th of August 1604. The Pope asked if he were the brother of Aloysius. As the Marquis replied in the affirmative, Pope Clement said

[1] *Chiarenza*, Una giornata a Castiglione 63.

that it was now clear to him how Francis had passed unscathed through the many dangers in the world of which he had told him; Aloysius had been his protector. Looking up at a picture of the Saint, the Pope exclaimed: "Happy is he, who now possesses heaven, and happy are you to have such a patron in heaven." Clement then asked if the Life of Aloysius had yet been published, and told Francis to see that it was done[1]. These being the Pope's sentiments, all seemed to promise well for the canonisation.

But Pope Clement died on the 5th of March 1605, and was succeeded by Paul V. At the first audience granted by the newly-elected Pope to the Imperial Ambassador, the latter begged him to have the canonical inquiry into the virtues of his brother begun, with a view to his canonisation. Cardinal Dietrichstein (the same who, as a young student, had shown himself so impetuous at the funeral of the Saint) begged for the same favour, and also asked permission to expose the portrait of the Saint over his tomb. In the morning of the 21st of May 1605 the Cardinal and the Imperial Ambassador appeared together at the Roman College, took the portrait of the Saint and bore it with their own hands to the Chapel of the Annunziata, whither the body of the Saint had been brought a few days previously from the Chapel of St. Sebastian. During the Mass, which the Cardinal then said, he proclaimed that he had done all this with the permission of the Pope, who had verbally bestowed upon Aloysius the title of "Blessed". This, then, was in reality the public beatification, which it was not yet customary to hold in St. Peter's with the ceremonies usual at the present day. The happy event was celebrated in Rome for a whole fortnight. The Marquis Francis bore the expense of decorating the Chapel, where

[1] Bolland. 1040 A.

everything glittered with gold and silver; and the Saint's old valet, Clement Ghizoni, hung up the first lamp over his tomb. The students did all they could to enhance the glory of Blessed Aloysius by the products of their industry and talent. This Roman celebration was followed by a long series of other brilliant festivities; Brescia, Parma, Cremona, Padua, Modena, and Castiglione would not be outdone. From all sides — from Germany, France, Poland, and Belgium — came streaming in the richest and most beautiful offerings for the tomb of the Beato.

With the consent of the Pope, the Bishops now began the processes over the virtues and miracles of the Saint. In the same year, 1605, petitions for his canonisation were presented by the Grand Duke of Tuscany, the Duke of Parma, the Bishop of Mantua (Francis Gonzaga), the Duke of Mantua and his sister, the widowed Duchess of Ferrara, the Infanta Maria of Spain, the Dukes of Savoy and Modena, the King and Queen of France, the Archduke Albert and his wife the Archduchess Clara Eugenie in Brussels, and finally by the Emperor Rudolph himself. The Imperial Ambassador in Rome presented another petition, asking the Pope to ratify solemnly and in writing the little of "Blessed" which he had already bestowed *viva voce*. This took place with all solemnity at the Consistory held on Sept. 21st 1605. A commission of three Cardinals had previously examined the life of Aloysius and the processes already held, and had given it as their opinion that not only his beatification, but even his canonisation might be proceeded with. The Brief of Beatification was sent to the Imperial Ambassador on the 19th of October 1605. The festivities of this brilliant year were closed by a magnificent thanksgiving celebration held in Mantua on the 22nd of December, during which there was a splendid procession, and the relics of the Saint were exposed for

public veneration all day long in the Cathedral. The Duke had a chapel erected in honour of the Saint in the Court Church of St. Barbara.

The Pope had the decision of the Congregation of Rites concerning the general and special Processes (Jan. 19th 1608 and Nov. 19th 1612) examined by the Rota with a view to the canonisation, and the report was presented on Jan. 3rd 1618. He then granted the use of a special Mass and Office of the Beato for all the States under the rule of the Gonzaga family and for the Jesuit houses in Rome. But Paul V. would not proceed to the canonisation itself, because he had already canonised St. Frances of Rome and St. Charles Borromeo.

Paul V. was succeeded by Pope Gregory XV., who occupied the Papal throne from 1621 to 1623. At the request of the General of the Society, Fr. Mutius Vitelleschi, this Pope extended the use of the special Mass and Office of B. Aloysius to all the houses of the Society of Jesus, by a Brief dated Oct. 2nd 1621. New petitions for the promotion of his canonisation were addressed to the next Pope, Urban VIII., by the Duke and Duchess of Lorraine (the latter of whom was a daughter of Duke Vincent of Mantua), by Queen Marie of France, by the German Empress Eleanora (another daughter of Duke Vincent of Mantua), and lastly by the Emperor Ferdinand II., who wished Aloysius to be raised to the highest honours of the Church in order that his intercession might set bounds to the spread of heresy and put an end to the scourge of the Mantuan war of succession [1].

---

[1] The direct line of the Dukes of Mantua had become extinct with the death of Cardinal Ferdinand Gonzaga (1627), who had succeeded his brother Francis in the Duchy. A collateral branch, the Gonzaga-Nevers of France, were the next in succession. This

Nevertheless, although everything was in readiness for the formal canonisation, the matter remained in abeyance for nearly another century. Perhaps God wished first to glorify Aloysius by still more miracles, or to give to other times the blessing attendant upon the canonisation; perhaps, also, it may have been due to prudent caution on the part of the Holy See, lest this matter might seem to have been settled more from human considerations, since so many princely relatives exerted themselves in favour of it. But still the succeeding Popes extended and promoted the veneration of Aloysius by the grant of various privileges. Alexander VII. (1655—1667) extended the use of the special Office and Mass to the inhabitants of the Valtellina also. Clement X. (1670—1676) gave Aloysius a place in the Roman Martyrology, where a eulogy on his innocence and his contempt of the world was inserted. Clement XI. (1700—1721), when requested by the General of the Society, Fr. Michael Tamburini, to at last promote the bull of canonisation, replied that Aloysius was already so much honoured in the Church for his holiness that there was no need to canonise him — an answer certainly full of honour for the Saint.

The solemn act of canonisation was reserved for Benedict XIII. (1724—1730). This Pope had had from his youth a great devotion to Aloysius. Following his example, he had renounced his title of Prince Orsini for the poverty of the Dominican Order. He always had a picture of the Saint in his cell, and read his life again and again. When Cardinal and Archbishop of Benevento, he often took the virtues of the Saint for the subject of his sermons, consecrated two altars in his honour, and, on hearing that

led to a war between the Emperor, the King of France, and the Duke of Savoy, which ended by the fief being settled upon Charles I. of the Gonzaga-Nevers family.

the process of canonisation was to be resumed in Rome (1716), he ordered public prayers to be said in his diocese for the happy issue of the work. He also obtained for his metropolitan Church the privilege of using the special Mass and Office of the Saint[1]. He made him the patron of his clergy, celebrated his feast with great solemnity, and was indefatigable in distributing pictures and biographies of him. On the 15th of April 1719 he wrote to the Promoter of the Faith, recommending to him the canonisation of Aloysius as a matter that had been often sufficiently examined, and had been established by miracles. As Aloysius was so well known in Rome and in the whole Church by general veneration he could see no reason for a new examination. In the meantime he was raised to the Chair of Peter on the 29th of May 1724, and on the 21st of June in the following year he gave Aloysius to all the Universities and Colleges of the Society of Jesus for their patron. In the succeeding year, on the 26th of April 1726, he signed the Decree of Canonisation. On the 21st of December the solemn ceremony itself took place with great pomp in St. Peter's. St. Stanislaus Kostka was canonised at the same time. The celebration in St. Peter's was echoed everywhere throughout the Church by festivals in honour of the two Saints. In Vienna especially the celebration was most magnificent; the students, the many religious congregations, the whole Court, with their Majesties the Emperor Charles VI. and the Empress Elizabeth Christina, the whole metropolitan Chapter of St. Stephen's, with the Papal Nuncio and the Archbishop, all took part in the grand procession.

This is a short review of the origin, the increase and completion of the cult of St. Aloysius. It is characterized

[1] This privilege was extended to the whole Archdiocese in 1781.

by three special traits. The first is the unusually early beginning of the cult. Aloysius had scarcely been fourteen years dead when he was raised to the altars. He shares this distinction only with his holy brother in religion, St. Stanislaus, whom his own brother Paul lived to see beatified.

The second trait of the Aloysian cult is its speedy propagation and great extent. Clement XI. was right in saying that seldom has a Saint found such admiration and veneration throughout the whole Church, even after his canonisation, as was already given to Aloysius at his beatification. In fact, Popes, Cardinals, Bishops, the secular and the regular clergy, people and princes, all took part in it. No less than five Emperors and Empresses, six Kings and Queens, and indeed, as Benedict XIII. says in the Bull of Canonisation, almost all the Catholic princes of Europe petitioned for it [1]. Innumerable are the sanctuaries that have been erected from time to time in his honour. Almost all the spots that are proved to have been hallowed by the presence of the Saint have been transformed into chapels. Of these there are two in Rome, three in Mantua, four at Castiglione, and one at Florence, at Fiesole, Madrid, Girona, Chieri, and Naples.

The Society of Jesus alone must have possessed at the time of its suppression about 2000 sanctuaries consecrated to him [2]. All, probably, are surpassed in wealth and majestic magnificence by the chapel over his tomb, in the right aisle of the Church of St. Ignatius in Rome. There all is resplendent with marble, gold, silver, and lapis lazuli. Under the altar is the tomb containing the remains of the Saint;

---

[1] Cf. *Manzini*, Vita e miracoli di S. L. G. II, chap. 11, p. 239

[2] Bolland. 1034 C. *Narbone*, Dieci glorie di S. L. G. p. 147, No. 2.

on the right and left two angels are sitting, one of whom carries instruments of penance, while the other spurns with his foot a globe, the symbol of earthly glory. Above the altar rises a lofty monument in barocco style, borne by four wreathed pillars of green marble, with bases and capitals of brass, and tendrils of gilded leaves twining round the pillars. On the crown-piece of the four marble pillars sit four angels in white marble, the two inner and larger of which symbolise penance and innocence. The centre space between the pillars is occupied by a marble slab, upon which is a figure in relief of Aloysius, transfigured and surrounded by clouds and angels, soaring to heaven. Thus the monument represents emblematically the hard toil of earthly life and its heavenly reward in the life to come. The Saint looks back with a glance of heavenly rapture at the vanishing earth, and really seems to say: "Behold with your eyes how I have laboured a little, and have found for myself much rest. Receive ye discipline as a great sum of money, and possess abundance of gold by her.... Work your work before the time, and he will give you your reward in his time" (Eccles. li. 35 ff). Beside the altar stand, as a finish to the monument, two large statues of angels with lily stems in their hands. The whole is the work of the French sculptor Le Gros, and a thank-offering from the Marquis Octavius Lancelotti for the recovery of his health [1].

The third remarkable feature of the cult of St. Aloysius is its duration and constancy. It flourished in spite of the suppression of the Society of Jesus. It is remarkable that Aloysius' only difficulty at the beginning of his religious life was, that he thought himself unworthy and unfit for

[1] Bolland. 1030 B. *Manzini*, Vita e miracoli di S. L. G. II, chap. 10, p. 237.

his vocation, and regarded his talents as insufficient. "What will you do, what will the Society be able to do with you?" he asked himself, when he heard accounts of the conquests made for holy faith and the kingdom of Christ by his great confrères in the East and in the newly-discovered parts of the globe. This thought saddened him. But there was no ground for sadness. Aloysius' work was not to be less glorious for the honour of God and the salvation of the world than that of his brethren. As a matter of fact, most of the works of the Order have crumbled away, ruthless hands have destroyed everything, and even the Order itself disappeared for a time; but the blessing of Aloysius' innocent life remained, and his altar continued to be honoured. There is scarcely a college or a seminary where his feast is not solemnly celebrated. These feasts were organized and perpetuated chiefly by the guilds of St. Aloysius, whose origin dates from the year 1642, when the first of them was formed in Padua [1]. The guild soon spread to other towns in Italy, and in the year 1885 it was raised to the status of an Archconfraternity in Rome [2]. The very popular devotion of the Six Sundays of St. Aloysius, which are yearly held by a countless number of young people, contributed greatly to the preservation of his cult. Their principal object is to obtain guidance in the choice of a vocation. Lastly, the devotion is maintained and propagated by the various detailed biographies of the Saint in all languages, as well as by written and verbal exhortations to venerate the Saint and celebrate his feast.

The fourth distinguishing trait of the cult of St. Aloysius is the great profit and solid fruit derived from devotions and feasts in his honour. The feasts of St. Aloysius are

---

[1] *Narbone,* Dieci glorie di S. L. G. 149.

[2] Ib. 531. Bolland. 1033 F.

not merely religious entertainments and pageants, but really feasts of devotion, penance, and encouragement to virtue and holiness. This character has always been maintained. One need only once witness an Aloysian celebration in Rome, where the 21st of June is kept as one of the most festive and beautiful days of the year. All that art, piety and generosity can offer to the beloved Saint is pressed into the service. During the whole morning both his chapels — the tomb in the Church of St. Ignatius and the chapel in the interior of the Roman College — are reserved for Cardinals, Bishops, and other prelates who come to offer the Holy Sacrifice there. One of the Cardinals usually gives Holy Communion to several hundred students. The distinctive feature of the celebration is the offering of vows and petitions for spiritual gifts and graces through the intercession of the Saint. At about 8 o'clock in the morning a procession files out of the sacristy of the Roman College, carrying floral and ex-voto offerings and the letters containing the petitions, encased in costly portfolios, and deposits them by the tomb under the altar. There they remain during the octave of the feast, after which they are brought first to the chapel in the Roman College and then to the Church of San Stefano rotondo, where they are burnt with great ceremony during the singing of the Te Deum. A recent writer says: "One must be present at the feast oneself, to see what a charm this Saint still exercises over young and old; one must visit on this feast his rooms, which are still preserved, in company with the crowd of worshippers, to feel in the very attitude of the visitors that indescribable something that lies like a sweet enchantment over all hearts." [1] It is the lily-like perfume of his innocence and holy life,

[1] *Stiegele,* Monastic pictures from Italy 222.

which pervades all ages and is wafted over all generations. How magnificently the words have been fulfilled which were prophetically written by the hand that baptized Aloysius: "May he be happy, loved by God, the thrice-Holy and Mighty One, and by men; and may he live for ever!" [1]

4. A Character Portrait.

The work which the glorified Saints continue to perform here below consists, in no small measure, in the power of their example to incite and encourage people of all conditions of life, but especially of those in which they themselves lived. The portrait of Aloysius' character is very important in this respect.

Character consists in the peculiar and distinguishing traits of a man. The portrait of a character, then, is the summary of all exterior and interior features and peculiarities which designate a man and distinguish him from others.

No definite information is available with regard to the external appearance of St. Aloysius. Generally speaking, he is said to have been exceedingly modest, retiring, and dignified in his bearing. From a vision [2] in which he appeared to Philibert Baronis we may conclude that his stature was somewhat above medium height, his nose rather long and slightly curved, and his countenance pale and emaciated. All this is confirmed by the best authenticated portraits of him. There are two of these. The first is one that Don Ferdinand had painted shortly before his son entered the Society. Aloysius is there represented in the costume of a page or young nobleman, in a black doublet and broad white ruffle. His bearing is upright, quiet, and firm; his features noble, intelligent, and full of princely

[1] Cf. above, p. 9.

[2] Bolland. 862 F. Cf. above, p. 184.

dignity. The broad shoulders and firmly-closed lips betray strength and firmness; the right arm rests upon the breast, the hand grasping the hilt of the rapier. It was probably this portrait that was exposed for public veneration at the first celebration held in Castiglione, and the one which his happy mother saw before her on the altar. The second picture hangs in the inner chapel of the Roman College — the room once occupied by Aloysius. Cardinal Bellarmine had it painted shortly after the death of the Saint. The features are the same, only more emaciated and ethereal. Aloysius is standing upright, his gentle gaze fixed in rapture on a crucifix before him, at the foot of which lie a skull, a crown, and instruments of penance. Both portraits are acknowledged to be the best [1], not only as regards the fidelity with which the features are represented, but also as regards artistic conception and execution, and they have therefore been added to this book. The first is even considered to be the work of Paul Veronese, and bears unmistakable traces of the style of that master. As Veronese died in 1590, it must have been one of his last works. But it is also possible that it may have been painted by one of Paul's brothers, Benedetto Cagliari.

As regards his mental faculties, Aloysius had a very clear and keen intellect, which he cultivated by diligent study and rendered capable of good work. In all his writings that have come down to us, we notice extraordinary maturity and development of judgment, which is also shown by his special preference for St. Thomas. In contrast to the practice of his age, so demonstrative and extravagant in its expressions and tokens of friendship and politeness [2], Aloysius is surprisingly moderate and objective

---

[1] Eco di S. Luigi, Milan 1890, No. 6, p. 4.

[2] *Hübner*, Sixtus V., II 137.

in his style, which in many ways reminds one of the simplicity of St. Ignatius. His letters express what he has to say in the shortest and simplest way possible; figures of speech and other rhetorical adornments are almost entirely lacking, and of fancy there is hardly a trace. Only when politeness requires it, does Aloysius make use of the conventional phrases of his age, but always with religious moderation. In his spiritual writings and sermons also he evidently always tries to use the simplest, clearest, and most suitable expressions. It requires an earnest and penetrating mind to appreciate the whole wealth and power of thought contained in his unassuming lines; those who look for fancy and natural feeling will find little to their taste. Only in the letters written during the latter years of his life is there more trace of emotion. What lent a peculiar unction to the style of the Saint's writings and apparently also to his conversation was the frequent and appropriate use he made of passages from Holy Scripture and the Fathers. Those are his favourite quotations, instead of Virgil or Homer.

Aloysius is said to have been naturally very vivacious, enterprising, and courageous; he promised to develop a thoroughly martial character, as may be seen from his soldier-life in Casale. But these more vivacious elements gave place — externally at least — to a disposition mature and earnest beyond his age, which, having once recognised its goal, strove after it with decision and neglect of all secondary objects. He concentrated all his faculties on the interior life, and scrupulously avoided all that might have diverted him from his principal purpose. Having early recognised that God alone is worthy of man's endeavour, and that a man is nobler, happier, and more fervent, in proportion as he exclusively devotes his powers to the Greatest Good and remains united to Him, Aloysius soon

began to lead that interior life of which St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi speaks as being the most prominent feature in the character of the Saint. Not merely his spiritual but even his bodily senses opened only to interior things, and became more and more closed to outward affairs. The world and all it contained, incidents, things, and men, existed for him only inasmuch as they were helpful or detrimental to him in his life's work, the quest and the finding of God. This one great relation of creatures who are nothing to the Creator Who is all was gradually more and more reflected in the everyday affairs of his life. That decision that goes straight to the root of things impressed its seal even upon his ordinary intercourse with his relatives and friends. What had to be said and done, because duty or courtesy required, was said and done; but he would have considered it an injury that no reasonable man could do to the serious task of his life, to give himself up to any distraction, amusement or pastime, beyond these necessary acts. It is not surprising, then, that there were some among those who surrounded him who found the Saint too serious, and wanting in amiability and sociability. It is a fact that people sometimes experienced a certain feeling of shyness and awe of him, and shunned his society [1]. The Spirit of God works in His Saints in a varied and manifold manner. It is related of Aloysius' most faithful imitator, St. John Berchmans, that he always had a smiling face, so that he was the favourite of the whole College. St. Stanislaus, who was canonised together with Aloysius, was likewise friendliness and amiability itself, and even went so far in his compliance and pleasantness to his brother Paul, as to learn to dance, which Aloysius indignantly refused to do.

[1] Bolland. 1007 B.

"What is this in comparison with eternity?" *Quid hoc ad aeternitatem?* In this short formula tradition has summed up the great, ever-recurring, all-determining question of his life. He himself expresses the same thought in the words: "Everything according to the principles of eternity!" But to him eternity is not the terrible spectre that mars the joy of the world, fills the soul with fear and horror and compels it to penance and self-denial. To Aloysius eternity presented quite a different appearance. To him it was a picture of supernatural and infinite beauty and attractiveness — God Himself. God, as He is, the Supreme Good of the soul — that is the explanation and interpretation of this wondrous life. God had made this heart for Himself in a special sense. In Aloysius we were to see how powerful God is, and how worthy to attract an immortal being entirely to Himself, to fill it completely, to bury it, as it were, in the abyss of His own being and transform it into Himself. In Aloysius is displayed the ardour, entirety, undividedness of Divine love. God drew this pure heart powerfully to Himself by prayer from the first years of its life, and it followed Him faithfully and devotedly. In Florence God inspired the Saint with fear of intercourse with the world, and with an inextinguishable hatred of every sin and its source, the irregular passions. In Mantua sickness, and perhaps also the ignorance of his physicians, urged him to great abstemiousness, and Aloysius found in this self-denial and later in his austerities in Castiglione a powerful help to union with God in prayer, and such abundance of heavenly consolation that he would not deprive himself of it again. In this union with God a new and unsuspected world of truth and beauty opened out before him, so that he disregarded all that this world could offer him, contemptuously left it aside and did not vouchsafe it another glance. There he saw truly colours

and lights that he met with nowhere else; there, in the companionship of God and the holy angels, he tasted enjoyments that were free from the flavour of death and decay of this world, foretastes of heavenly joys. Aloysius is not without feeling; he has a soft and tender heart, as his abundant tears prove; but this heart belongs to God with all that it has and is. The Divine majesty and beauty has become all in all to him; to turn away his glance from the contemplation of It seems to him an irreparable loss; and to pay attention to creatures, an infidelity and a danger. The world has for him beauty and value, only because it can be made a sacrifice to the Divine Majesty and a gift of his own love. All is referred by him to God. It is his honour and his happiness to belong to Him, to be His servant and His child; his only grief is to see sin and disregard of God in the world. If he denies himself the last pleasure here below and crucifies his innocent flesh, it is only to offer expiation to the Divine Majesty and repair the loss of His honour and the injury done to His kingdom. "*The world is now full of iniquity; who shall appease the wrath of the Almighty?* Very many priests and religious think but little of their vocation. How can God suffer longer such a devastation of His kingdom? The faithful rob Him of His honour by the great tepidity and carelessness of their lives; who is to make reparation?" [1] This is the inward motive of his self-hatred and penance. And if his vocation is more to him than anything; if he slight all the honours of the world and even flesh and blood for it; if he loves it more tenderly than his relatives; if he victoriously fights for it by ardent prayers, the hardest penances, and the most heroic constancy in the face of his father's threats and tears; if all in this vocation seems

[1] Cf. chap. 8, p. 63.

to him great, holy, and admirable; then the reason of all this is solely that in his vocation he sees the Will of God, and the way to serve Him and attain to the possession of Him. The same motive of love makes him never tire of speaking of God, and though so young, he longs to take part in the mission to the heathen; for this motive he once more forsakes his beloved solitude and returns to his home, and finally pushes forward with holy impatience to serve the plague-stricken, and loses his young life in consequence of this holy service. Thus the love of God absorbed and consumed his whole being, his life, his thoughts and endeavours. The tenor of this life is expressed in the beautiful words of the Psalmist: "What have I in heaven? and besides thee what do I desire upon earth? For thee my flesh and my heart hath fainted away; thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion for ever" (Ps. lxxii. 25 26).

Aloysius was in earnest about his love of God, and not less in earnest about his love of his neighbour. But love is amiable, and Aloysius was so serious! It is a queer thing, this much-lauded amiability. It is often anything but real love; it is rather yielding indecision, ignoble weakness and insincerity towards oneself and one's neighbour. True amiability is interior, cordial kindness, unselfish and self-sacrificing love of one's neighbour. This true amiability was shown by Aloysius in the highest degree. When there was question of being really useful to his neighbour, he was at his post at once, with all the means his loving heart could devise. How kind he always was to his subjects and inferiors! how friendly towards all who met him! If, rapt in God, he now and then overlooked a greeting offered to him, who can take it amiss? It was the only fault of which anyone could accuse him, and what pains he took to overcome it! If he went farther in his penance and

self-crucifixion than others did, that only hurt him, not them; and if he thought he must do more, because God required it of him, must we not love and esteem him all the more for it? With what charity he embraced all men in his heart, and how earnestly he sought to further their salvation and perfection! He proved beyond a doubt that he was full of tenderness towards his Order and his brethren in religion. What a joy it was to him to instruct the poor and ignorant, to comfort the sick and afflicted! Is it not a very excess of amiability, to die for love of men? The only pain he ever caused his brethren was that he died so soon. Aloysius loved and was beloved. The tokens of the highest esteem and veneration that were paid to him in life and still more after his death, surely outweigh the cheap praise of having been a sociable and amiable companion and conversationalist! Aloysius loved, loved much, loved till death, and therefore he has become for ever the darling of the world. In spite of his austerity and gravity he attracts everyone. Not without reason has Holy Church chosen for the Gospel of his feast the very passage of Scripture in which a doctor of the law asks Our Saviour which is the greatest commandment in the law. The answer is: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. And the second is like to this: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments dependeth the whole law and the prophets" (Matt. xxii. 37—40). That is the summary of Aloysius' whole life, and a portrait of his character.

5. The Glory of Youth.

There are three classes in life for whom the example and virtues of St. Aloysius have a special significance: the

young, the upper classes, and religious. The life of the Saint, relatively so short, — not really a life, properly speaking, but merely a preparation for life — is a model full of efficacy and significance for the young, and on this account Aloysius has been chosen as their patron.

The claim of St. Aloysius to the title of Patron of youth rests upon two grounds.

The first reason is, that the Church herself has appointed him the patron of youth. The Society of Jesus was very eager on this account to have him canonised, that she might be able to hold him up to her numerous alumni as their model and protector. Benedict XIII. readily acceded to this wish, and a year before he raised him to the altars as a Saint, he already made him by a Motu Proprio of the 21st of June 1725 the patron of Christian youth, of the Colleges and Universities of the Society of Jesus, and of all who wished to choose him as their special patron [1].

The patronage of youth exactly suited his own inclination and his heart's desire, for he had a special love for the young. One of the reasons why he first cast his glance towards the Society of Jesus was, that one of its chief occupations is the education of the young [2]. Later on, in the Roman College, he petitioned his superiors from the very first to give him a post as instructor of children. He could bring forward numberless reasons for this, and took the greatest pains to acquire the necessary qualifications [3]. What his death prevented, was after death granted to him by Heaven on the most magnificent scale.

Secondly, this appointment of external authority is founded upon the intrinsic relations of the Saint's life to that of Christian youth. If we consider merely the external circum

---

[1] Cf. *Cepari* (Edit. 1862) p. 253 and 332.

[2] Bolland. 945 C. [3] Ib. 985 B.

stance of his life, we see the fitness of the patronage. His years barely passed the limits of youth. His life was spent in subjection both within and without the Society, at home and at college. His devotions were those of youth: devotion to the Mother of God, to the holy angels and the Blessed Sacrament. The occupations which claimed his attention were youthful exercises and consisted ever in preparation for his vocation.

Further, the life of St. Aloysius is the most beautiful and perfect pattern for youth. He finished his youthful career most gloriously, and succeeded brilliantly in the tasks and objects of youth. The aim of youth is to prepare for life and pave the way for the choice of a vocation, finally to settle the question, and to enter upon the vocation chosen. In all these points Aloysius set a brilliant example.

He prepared for the choice of a vocation by three special virtues. The first of these was his piety. Piety is the first duty towards God, and the basis of all temporal and eternal welfare. Without religion, the blessing of God does not rest upon our weapons, and life is thrown away. Aloysius was a pious child, full of true religion and devotion. He loved prayer, and prayed much; his joy was to converse with God. He was full of the fear of God, of hatred of all offence against God, of readiness to fulfil His Will and invincible constancy in carrying it out. How instructive and encouraging is his example in this age of proud self-sufficiency, of revolt from God, of unbelief and godlessness! Whence all this misery, but that happiness is not sought where alone it is to be found? Whence so many lost existences, but that they did not find themselves in God; whence so much moral ruin, but that the foundation is not laid in God? Where is that education which inculcates as its cardinal principle that everyone should follow only that vocation in which he

can find God most easily and most abundantly? Where the young people who still remember that life is given to us only to know God, to serve Him, to love Him, and to find Him?

The second virtue by which Aloysius prepared for the choice of a vocation was purity of heart, which consists in general in freedom from all venial sins, and in particular in freedom from sins of the flesh. In this point he was quite heroic and unsurpassed, as befits a patron of youth. His example ought at least to enable youthful hearts to arrive at the crossways of life and choose their vocation, unstained by the terrible vice, fresh, strong, and chaste. This is an essential point of the preparation for a future state in life. Purity makes piety easy and pleasant, impurity renders it repugnant and terrible; purity is a warlike virtue, dependent upon combat and self-conquest, which steels the will and character; impurity unnerves and is the ruin of all moral strength and independence. Purity gives aptitude and fitness for work; impurity destroys all energy and zeal for study. An unpolluted youth is a glorious capital for a future career, whilst impurity is a degrading stigma, which drives away God's blessing. God does not touch an impure instrument; or, if He uses it, it is to punish the world. Pope Benedict expressly says in his Brief that he gives Aloysius to young students as their patron, that he may protect the innocence of youth on the slippery path. Assuredly the world was always a slippery path for innocence, but it seems to become ever more and more slippery and dangerous. Now-a-days it is a very snare of temptation, and youthful hearts fall like quails into the net. What Tacitus once said of his age: *Corrumpere et corrumpi saeculum vocatur* (Modern life consists in corrupting and being corrupted) may surely be said with equal truth of our time of deep moral degradation.

Is it not almost a miracle, if a child arrives at the choice of a vocation, unscathed in its purity? How greatly needed, then, is a brilliant example and a powerful protector like Aloysius!

The third virtue by which Aloysius paved the way for his vocation was diligence. In the above mentioned Brief Pope Benedict emphasizes the fact that he gives Aloysius to the young as a model and patron of their studies. Aloysius worked diligently and untiringly, although his noble birth opened out to him the path to every honour; he worked under circumstances that would have made study difficult to anyone, in the midst of the distractions of Court life in Florence, Madrid, and Milan; he did not follow hobbies, like so many of his class, who will not be more than easy-going dilettantes at any price, but pursued earnest and solid studies. He never lost an opportunity of acquiring knowledge, and did not consider it beneath his dignity to go through all school exercises; he is said never to have omitted a study without unavoidable cause[1]. Lastly, Aloysius was very successful in his work. Neither piety nor innocence can dispense us from work; still less can noble birth. Piety makes work a duty, because it is God's ordinance; chastity demands it for her protection, and the future career as its preliminary condition. Neither Church nor State can make use of the ignorant. Lovers of cigars, dogs, horses, and women are not the men that our age needs, they will be of no help; but men of piety, purity, and industry. God called His prophets and the saviours of His people out of the desert, away from the plough and the threshing-floor, but never from the dens of impurity, debauchery and idleness. A pure, God-fearing and industrious youth is the right

[1] Bolland. 952 A. B.

preparation for the future career, which has to be found by a wise choice.

The actual choice of a state of life was made by Aloysius with exemplary perfection. He made everything subordinate to the Will of God, His service, and the salvation of his own soul. He weighed quietly and impartially the various states of life, examining how far his talents and dispositions were suited to each; he prayed and entreated for supernatural enlightenment, until it was granted to him.

Once certain of his vocation, he strove with all the strength of his will to attain it. Difficulties were placed in his way on all sides, but they did not bend his constancy and courage. He held out during the struggle, fighting with legitimate weapons and endurance, and combated all, until he could triumphantly intone his song "In exitu Israel de Ægypto" and enter into the land of desire and the City of the Saints. Thus Aloysius honourably performed all the tasks of youth, and has a full right to be its patron. The young readily followed the directions of God and the Church in this respect; nay rather, they anticipated them, for they themselves took the initiative in the public veneration of the Saint.

From the first students' feast held in Brescia down to the present day the Aloysian celebrations are *par excellence* feasts of the young. The youthful Saint still continues to attract youthful hearts by an irresistible force, protects them and leads them to the glorious goal of a happy choice of a state in life. This is the principal object of the six Aloysian Sundays.

This old love of the young for their patron Saint blazed out again in a mighty flame at the centenary celebrations of his death in 1891. These were prepared for during the preceding year by articles in magazines[1], and introduced

[1] Such as the *Eco di S. Luigi* in Milan.

by two Briefs of Pope Leo XIII.[1], so that, with the co-operation of the Bishops, they culminated in a feast that embraced the whole Catholic world. In Germany there was not a Cathedral or a poor little church in the Diaspora that had not its Aloysian centenary celebration. The number approaching the Sacraments was scarcely less than at Easter. The feast was celebrated with special solemnity in Cologne, Mayence, Munich, and Vienna.

Rome, as is only fitting, seems this time again to have borne off the palm. The Church of St. Ignatius was completely transformed into a sanctuary of St. Aloysius. The somewhat unornamental walls, pillars, and columns of the Church were hidden by costly tapestries of red damask with rich gold and silver hangings. Only the thousands of lights and the four or five hundred crystal chandeliers marked out the contours of the majestic edifice in sparkling and shining lines. Through the dusk of the rest of the building the altar of the Saint shone out like the rising sun, resplendent with the gold and silver votive offerings sent from all lands by pious hearts and skilful artistic hands.

The special celebration of the Roman feast of St. Aloysius, the floral offerings and the presentation of petitions to the Saint[2] developed this time to an enormous extent. With the petitions came also addresses from children of all Catholic countries, and in such numbers, that room could not be found for them all at the tomb of the Saint. Some of them bore 150,000 signatures. In the Spanish children's album the Queen Regent had signed first for little King Alfonso; then came the names of the two little princesses, and column after column of all the noble names in Spain, down to the poorest and most destitute. At the

[1] Dated Oct. 29th 1890 and Jan. 1st 1891.

[2] Cf. above, p. 196.

head of the Austrian address were the names of all the little Archdukes and Archduchesses. The magnificent address sent by the Amalgamation of all the German students' societies was sent by the Pope to be laid at the tomb on the feast itself, but it was immediately returned to him, as he wished to keep this proof of the attachment of the young German students. — As to the floral offerings, all the rose-gardens of Bulgaria and all the lily-plots in the gardens and villas of Florence, Nice, and Genoa seemed to have been despoiled of their treasures. In gigantic pyramids the beautiful offspring of the southern sun was massed beside the altar, the lovely blossoms wafting their sweet, entrancing fragrance into the soft warm air of the sanctuary.

The principal Mass during the whole Octave was celebrated by a Cardinal, with pomp such as was never seen before, and the various Orders sent their most renowned preachers to pronounce the daily panegyric. The close of the Octave was especially solemn. High Mass was sung by Cardinal Rampolla, the Secretary of State, and after the evening sermon Cardinal Monaco Lavaletta, accompanied by 182 clerics bearing torches, representatives of all the Roman Colleges, Congregations, and Orders, ascended the altar for the solemn Te Deum, at the conclusion of which Cardinal Parocchi, by special commission of the Pope, gave the Apostolic Blessing.

It was beautiful, edifying, and elevating to be at St. Ignatius' during the days from June 21st to 29th. The sea of lights on high, the wealth of flowers with their clouds of balsamic perfume, the voices of the choir and the organ sounding from above, and the succession of devout throngs in festive attire — all this seemed, as eye-witnesses said, like a fable from the Arabian Nights, like a transitory glimpse of heaven.

But besides the brilliant outward pomp, the feast was characterized by deep and thorough earnestness. Many prayers were said, and the number of Communions in the Church of St. Ignatius alone rose during the days of preparation and the Octave to 37,000. On the feast itself there were 12,000. Young scions of the noblest families formed a Guard of Honour at the tomb of St. Aloysius, kept order, and collected alms thrice a day among the crowded throng of people[1].

Such is St. Aloysius' patronage of Christian youth, as assigned to him by Divine Providence, and it is a beautiful privilege. What is there in all the Church Militant more beautiful than the band of young hearts in the bloom of youth that follow Aloysius' banner? And this charge of his is a very important one. The chosen band of his children is not only the ornament and the pride of the Church Militant, but also her hope and her strength. From it heaven and earth seek and recruit their warriors. This patronage is no empty title of honour, but an efficacious work. In the example of St. Aloysius lies a Divine strength. How many has it encouraged to purity, virginity and holiness, or to holy zeal for penance! We have a conspicuous example of this among St. Aloysius' own nearest relatives.

---

[1] Eco di S. Luigi, Milan 1891, No. 21, p. 10. — This edifying spectacle drew forth from a bad Roman paper the following sighs: "Incredible, but true! The spectacle afforded during the last few days in the Jesuit Church by young men in the bloom of youth and of attractive appearance excites our admiration and envy. They are not ashamed to take the rosaries of the devotees and touch Gonzaga's tomb with them, nor to beg for the Jesuits. Twenty years ago this would not have been possible. In vain do we exert ourselves to drive the stupid superstition out of the people. Such courage is only to be found with the Clericals, but — let us confess it — certainly not with our own sons."

The three nieces of the Saint, daughters of his brother Rudolph, the Princesses Cynthia, Olympia and Gridonia, all became religious. The two first were induced by the virtuous life of their uncle to forsake the world and found a religious institute in Castiglione, which still flourishes there at the present day. Their prayers at last drew the third sister to follow their example, although at first she had had very different intentions. All three died in the odour of sanctity, and their bodies, still incorrupt and well-preserved, lie in the Church of St. Aloysius at Castiglione[1]. Lastly, the Saint's patronage is perpetual. The great devotion to St. Aloysius brilliantly survived the dissolution of the Society of Jesus. Independent of his Order, Aloysius influences Christian youth by his example and his miraculous power, and many honour the Saint without thinking or even knowing that he belonged to the Society of Jesus.

This beautiful office of patron and protector, which has done so much good and produced so much holiness in the Church, and has brought so much glory to God and to Aloysius himself, is his reward for having consecrated his youth to God and obeyed His call. Instead of the little principality, he has received a world-wide dominion; instead of the small number of subjects that he left, all the young people of the kingdom of Christ have become his inheritance. That is his kingdom; there he rules, there he protects, there he leads to blessing and victory.

6. The Mirror of Princes.

At all the celebrations that were held in honour of St. Aloysius there shone over his picture, beside the Name of Jesus, his title as Prince of the Empire. Among other

[1] Bolland. 848 C. 1155—1167.

reasons in his petition for Aloysius' canonisation, the Emperor Ferdinand II. brought forward the benefit it would be to all princes and the upper classes to have in him a protector and a model [1]. And the Rota based its approbation for the canonisation upon the same motive [2].

Aloysius was really a prince, not only by birth, but also in his disposition and his virtues. Among the latter there are three especially worthy of note, because in them a truly noble and princely disposition is manifested.

In the first place, a truly noble and princely mind is characterised by a noble contempt of the world and all earthly greatness and glory. But this contempt must be rightly understood. It is not unbounded or unconditional, for earthly things, rank and station, are creatures and ordinances of God, and are therefore not without a real value; the more so, as with rank and title and high position are connected influence and other temporal blessings. But they are not unconditional blessings, because they do not of themselves make a man great, good, or happy. True contempt of the world, therefore, holds to the medium path between unconditional contempt and unconditional esteem, and is nothing else than the right and true estimate of earthly things in the light of reason and faith. Earthly things are not our end, but means to the end, hence they derive all their value from their fitness as means, and must be always subordinated to this end. If a high-born man sees in his noble birth and in all the temporal advantages that surround him an unconditional, true greatness, and regards himself on this account as an exceptional being, then he does not hold nobility in subjection, but is governed by nobility; he is infinitely small in his greatness, and by

[1] Bolland. 886 E. [2] Ib. 1149 F.

no means really noble or princely, because he is neither wise nor free.

Aloysius was wise, and saw to the root of things. For him nobility of race and high position had in themselves very little value. Before his eyes a greater, higher, and more glorious world lay open, namely, God's kingdom here below and in eternity; and to be a member and an heir of this kingdom was in his estimation an infinitely higher nobility. In order to have in this glorious kingdom a superior position, a treasure and a throne, he renounced his earthly principality and chose the humility and poverty of the religious state, to which the possessions and privileges of the kingdom of heaven are promised (Matt. xix. 21 28). In the light of the glory of this kingdom every earthly greatness seemed small to him, and every service of human princes worthless; indeed, he was ashamed of his earthly lineage, and his noble extraction annoyed him, because it tended to hinder his making his fortune for heaven. On this account he blotted all remembrance of it out of his mind, and any reminder of it was painful and repugnant to him. He felt happy and at home only in God's house, and even there he wished to be the poorest and the least. And was he not right? Can one make a better use of the things of earth, than to purchase heaven with them? What shows more nobility of soul than to prove oneself free and undisturbed by all that is not one's ideal and one's highest aim in life? He who forsakes a principality to follow, as a well-armed knight, Jesus his King in His crusade against hell and the world, shows the true princely disposition, the true nobility of heart. Aloysius recognised this, and he was taught by God Himself. Happy Saint! His life was but short and fleeting, and yet how many great personages and sovereigns he saw sink into the grave before himself! And if he could have gazed into the future! Not

long after his death Margaret Gonzaga, the Duchess of Ferrara, returned to Mantua a widow. The Pope suppressed the tenure of the fief, and soon the grass grew in the streets and squares of Ferrara, once so proud of its art treasures. The earthly glory of the Estes was gone. Not many years later the Spanish King Philip, the mightiest monarch of his age, lay on his death-bed. He had the crucifix used by his own father when dying brought to him, and said to his son and successor: "See, thus ends the glory of the world. In a few hours I shall be wrapped in a shroud. The crown falls from my head; death takes it from me, in order to give it to you. One day it will fall from your head also. My days are numbered, and yours are also determined." [1] A crucifix and a shroud — that was all that remained to Philip of his glory. Aloysius also had these, and probably Aloysius gazed at the crucifix with more confidence than the Catholic King. With the Gonzagas, too, death soon played sad havoc. The ducal line became extinct in the year 1708. Soon the collateral branches Guastalla, Novellara, and Bozzoli also died out. In the year 1819 the last of the Gonzagas of Castiglione died as an Austrian pensioner. The castle of the Gonzagas and their magnificent palaces in Mantua are now little more than a mausoleum, and a parable in stone of their vanished glory. Soldiers and officials share the lower rooms; in the princely apartments above the pictures of Giulio Romano and Andrea Mantegna alone enact dumb scenes from the history of the vanished race. Many a princely figure and many a charming portrait of a child or noble lady, on canvas or in marble, looks down upon the visitor; but their very names are unknown. Nor have the ravages of time spared the proud castle on the rocks of Castiglione.

[1] *Weiss*, Weltgeschichte IV, 2nd Part, p. 840.

The French commander De Villars had it destroyed in the year 1706, during the war of the Spanish succession. The old tower at the gate is still standing, but instead of looking down on the castle gardens as of yore, it now only keeps guard over a solitary vineyard, the forsaken chapel, and the ruins of the seigneurial castle. A weather-beaten and crumbling coat-of-arms serves as a reminder of the former rulers. The beautiful view from above over town and hills and sea has alone remained. How advantageously and at how great a price did Aloysius sell to God the barren rock and the charming view! Where would he be now, had he not obeyed the call of God? His name, like that of many other Gonzagas, would have to be sought in the dark and mouldy vault of some little Italian country town, or in the complicated genealogies of long-vanished dynasties of Northern Italy. That would be all that remained of him. But now a ray of heavenly light falls even across the shadows in which the forgotten bearers of his name are slumbering; his family lives through him, his own name is on everyone's lips, and a thousand sanctuaries proclaim his undying glory throughout the Catholic world. The glory of this world is past and gone; but his heavenly glory will last for all eternity.

The second princely virtue is the fear of God. The fear of God is especially becoming in those of high station. A high position does not free us from the obligation of obedience and fidelity to God. On the contrary, the more blessings fall to the lot of man, the more allegiance he owes to God, and the more is he bound to show Him fidelity and gratitude. The finest and most delicate sense of lawful authority has always been a distinguishing mark of true nobility. If a nobleman turns traitor to his king, or even if he shows himself cowardly in his service, it is a crime that in everyone's eyes makes him unworthy of

his rank. God is the supreme Lord and King of all kings, and princes and nobles are but His vassals; they have taken the oath of fealty to Him, and they will have to give an account of their service. To serve God from joyful conviction that it is His right, from a certain sense that we owe it to our state, and to regard this service as a special honour — is true nobility. Nobles also owe the example of this sincere service of God to their subjects. If the people see that their princes and others in authority have no respect for the unassailable principle of obedience to rightful authority, and that they set at defiance their God, on Whom they are more dependent than the lowest subject upon his king, what will then become of the bond that unites the people to the throne? The power and stability of the nobility has no more secure foundation than in God and in the preservation of dependence upon God, Who rules in the hearts of subjects by the power of conscience. A man in high position can therefore do nothing more dignified, more beneficial, or more becoming to his station than to show God the recognition and fidelity due to Him.

In this respect also, what a splendid example Aloysius set his peers! He served God not only in the privacy of his own room, but took every opportunity of paying Him honour and worship in public. He never omitted to receive the Sacraments and assist at Divine Service in his parish church on Sundays and feast-days, although he might have satisfied his devotion in the private chapel of the Castle. In order to honour God still more by his humility, he would never use the cushion and velvet-covered prie-dieu placed for him, but always knelt on the hard floor in the most reverent attitude. It was his joy to serve Mass, and he regarded it as an honour to teach little children the Catechism. He suffered no offence against God among his servants. No society was too high for him to converse about God,

and rank and high position had little weight with him when the honour and service of the Divine Majesty was in question; but he spoke frankly, admonishing and reproving. How earnestly he talked to his brother Rudolph, when the latter seemed to hesitate a little to do his duty to God! Even as a mere boy, he thought it his duty to reprove the heir to the Spanish throne for an unbecoming word against the Divine power. With what emphasis he pointed out to his father the superior right of God over His creature, and the duty of obeying His call and serving Him where He bids, and showed that in this respect the son of a Marquis is bound to obey just as much as the least of his subjects! He refused even to give an address to the people until an end had been put to the scandal at the Castle.

Aloysius was truly a servant of God. He sought his Master's honour everywhere, boldly and zealously, with his whole heart; and he was not ashamed to speak of God's precepts before everyone. God's commandments were "in the midst of his heart". And therefore God exalted and glorified him so much, that all the princes of Europe considered it an honour to be related to him, to have been in contact with him, or even to be able to contribute in some degree to his honour. The life of St. Aloysius is a striking proof that to serve God is to reign, and that God glorifies those who glorify Him. What earthly monarch will or can bestow such a reward? How true are the words of Holy Scripture: "Well done, good and faithful servant; because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (Matt. xxv. 23).

The third virtue of those in high position is benevolence, co-operation for the happiness and well-being of the world. God is so good, that in order to make other men happy,

He allows men to take His place in the world. Princes and great men have a large share in this privilege. They rule, each according to his rank and station; but to rule, according to the maxims of the Gospel, does not mean to abuse one's power and take advantage of it for selfish and arbitrary interests, to make it a tool of one's passions, or to pander to idleness, covetousness, sensuality and ambition. That would be not Christian government, but tyranny. To rule in the Christian sense of the word means to serve the public weal, even to self-devotion (Matt. xx. 25 28). To rule means to lead towards the goal, to do good to men in body and soul, to promote the welfare and happiness of men, of the Church and State by all the talents granted to us by God.

"Perform good works not only in the sight of God, but also in the sight of men", Aloysius wrote to his brother; adding, with regard to his subjects: "As regards the vassals I will only say this: God has placed them in a special manner under your protection, in order that you may show to them the special and spiritual care that you owe to them. You may see by the manner in which Divine Providence acts towards you how you ought to treat your dependants and care for their welfare." [1] In another letter he recommends to his brother, as a work of justice, to protect some virgins who wish to enter a religious Order, and then continues: "Next I recommend to your Excellency another work of mercy, which indeed I think you are in duty bound to practise. This is that you remember to aid your vassals in their poverty, especially this year." [2]

Thus did Aloysius think of the duties of the nobility; and thus, above all, did he himself act. How little of the possessions and enjoyments of this world he retained for

[1] Cf. chap. 16, p. 214. [2] Cf. chap. 17, p. 236 ff.

himself! How frugally and poorly he lived! Probably not one of his subjects would have cared to change places with him. But his hand was always open to others. What infinitely great good he did, especially to the souls of his fellow-men, by his virtuous example! Surely God so ordered the circumstances of his life that he might appear and live at the most celebrated Courts of his age, in order that the great might take example from him. He sanctified everything by his virtue, his prayers, and his life of sacrifice. He was, according to the counsels of God, a hidden, but powerfully efficacious instrument for the well-being of his age. From his childhood he was occupied with the thought of the general needs and afflictions of the Church and the world. To offer himself for the common weal was one of the principal motives that urged him to practise the severest penances and enter the monastic precincts. And how earnestly he sought to prepare himself for his vocation, how anxious he was to become a useful member of the Society, that his life therein might be for the profit of all!

In the choice of his vocation, he was specially attracted to the Society by the great object it has in view, namely, to help the Church and work for the good of souls. *Ich dien'* (I serve), is the truly noble motto of the Princes of Wales; it was also the guiding thought of St. Aloysius. He wished, like the Apostle, to be the servant of all, in order to lead all to God and to true happiness. In accordance with his wish, God has given him the nations for his inheritance, and by his benefits, his lessons, and his virtuous example he is to rule over them to the most distant ages. "Because thou hast been faithful in a little, thou shalt have power over ten cities" (Luke xix. 17).

How well it would be for the world, if these thoughts and sentiments prevailed everywhere, especially among the upper classes, whom God has appointed to influence the

masses! They can learn them from Aloysius, just as they may learn from him in general how to order their lives aright. To live does not mean to pass one's days in repose and pleasure, but to strive, to work, to achieve. To work does not mean to have hobbies, to dabble in everything, to learn a little of all that does not cost any real trouble; all this is only another, more becoming kind of idleness. To work means to do one's duty energetically for God's glory and the welfare of men; we must do this even if it costs us something, and thus take our share in the sentence: "In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread."

7. The Lover of the Pearl of Great Price.

Aloysius' importance is by no means confined to his influence over the young and the upper classes of society. He was a religious, and a perfect and holy religious; and as such he has become a perfect model of the religious life, in three respects.

In the first place, Aloysius is a model for religious in his love of his vocation. Without a great, joyous, and lasting love of one's vocation it is impossible to live in it contentedly, to overcome its peculiar difficulties, and to fulfil its obligations, if not in a heroic at least in a worthy manner. A mere sentimental love of it at the outset is by no means sufficient; such love would soon be killed by the monotony of the life, crushed by the burden of the daily sacrifices, sobered by hard reality, and finally disappear altogether. Only he who knows what he seeks in the Order and why he seeks it, and whose will becomes stirred to enthusiasm in the contemplation of his high aim and the eternally noble and secure foundation on which it rests — he alone will become a whole-hearted religious and remain one in spite of everything.

Aloysius loved and esteemed the religious state above all. As a boy — even as a mere child — it was his delight to converse with religious. He preferred their society to all the pleasures and amusements of the world. As his knowledge increased, and under the influence of grace, he chose the religious life for his portion, and began while still in the world to practise all religious exercises. He felt at home only when with religious; then the boy, otherwise so serious, was all joy, cordiality and affection. But his love for his vocation was more gloriously proved by the long and severe struggle that he had to go through with his own father, in order to attain his end. He not only sought assiduously the precious pearl of the vocation to religious life; he won it in noble, knightly battle. No one was more joyous than he when renouncing his coronet; his eyes sparkled with joy as he took leave of his family. "This is my resting-place for ever, I have chosen it", were the words with which he greeted the threshold of the convent. He actually lost his gladness and peace when compelled to exchange even for a few days his poor, bare cell for the pomp of princely apartments. He felt like a half-frozen man who steps out of a snow-storm into a warm and cosy room, when at last he could set foot again on the threshold of the College.

Such was Aloysius' just esteem for the religious life. His solid, lofty, and intelligent mind saw plainly through the emptiness and nothingness of all worldly efforts and worldly success. The useless and senseless waste of time of those in high life was repugnant to him, whilst its thousand enticing dangers frightened him and urged him, like the dove, to take speedy flight from the rising flood of sin to the "crevice in the rock". On the other hand, the good sense, solidity, security, and purity of the religious life attracted him to it with irresistible force. And the last

and convincing motive was the evident Will and call of God. God's Will makes everything possible and everything sweet. It is principally this love and esteem of their vocation that Aloysius teaches religious.

He is their model also in his zeal not only to embrace his vocation, but also to strive to attain its end by the faithful use of the means available. The aim of the religious life is perfection; the means consist in the observance of the vows, rules, and statutes of the Order, which point out exactly the road to follow, in order to arrive at the goal. It is well known with what exactness and zeal Aloysius attended to the fulfilment of the smallest rules of the Order. He made use especially of two means, in which all others are essentially comprised, namely, mortification and prayer. By these means he had already attained to an astonishingly high degree of perfection in the world. In a very short time after his entrance into the Society he rose, by using them as regulated by the statutes and customs of the Order, to that height of perfection which we admire in him to-day.

Mortification is the moral strength by which we keep under control all that is sinful or irregular in us, and make ourselves capable of practising the virtues of our vocation. In our fallen state this costs us trouble and exertion, and therefore we call it mortification, self-conquest, or self-denial. We are full of irregular inclinations, and are continually incited by them to transgress against our duties. To practise what is good and virtuous is in itself beautiful and easy; it is only the difficulties that our passions place in the way, that make the practice of virtue difficult. Self-conquest must step in and exert its strength to remove the obstacle. Our progress depends not only upon our co-operation, but still more upon God's action within us, and on the communications of His grace. He is willing

to give us grace, but we put hindrances in the way. These hindrances, again, are removed by self-denial; hence it is the universal remedy in the spiritual life. Mortification is the most precious offering of love, which satisfies thus its desire to be pleasing to God and like unto His Son, our Lord and King.

Now we understand why Aloysius was so eager for the practice of mortification. He had no irregular passions to quell; even the very last shred of evil inclinations had been mortified, as far as is possible in this life, since we are not, like the Blessed Virgin, preserved entirely free from every irregular motion. In Aloysius' case, then, mortification had a higher office to perform. It was the precious myrrh that he offered to God as a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the world; the wings on which he soared up to the love of the Supreme Good, and exchanged grace for grace. It is quite certain that Aloysius rose to such a high degree of union with God, and had the power of drawing streams of sweetness from his prayer, only because he was completely detached and mortified. Man can purchase union with God only by self-denial.

The second means of perfection is prayer. If mortification detaches us from creatures and from ourselves, and removes the obstacles to Divine communication within us, it is prayer that unites us directly to God. Aloysius was convinced of the beauty and sublimity of prayer; he knew that man can do nothing higher than to unite himself to God, his last end, and begin here below the life of our blessed eternity. He was further convinced that it is our duty constantly to adore, praise, and love God, because man is here on earth simply for that purpose. Every moment voluntarily withdrawn from this noble service would have seemed to him a kind of sacrilege. Lastly, Aloysius was vividly penetrated with the necessity of prayer, and

knew only too well that it is a universal means of grace for all men and for everything, and that solely by the power of prayer man can work out his salvation. He would have been alarmed if he had let a single hour pass without prayer. That is why he took such astonishing pains to become a master of every kind of prayer. It was a glorious result of his efforts and of the preventing grace of God, that his prayer was uninterrupted by distractions, and he could not avoid constant actual union with God. A special means used by him to attain this union was the practice of spiritual conversation. The side from which danger threatens our union with God is intercourse with creatures. In order to render it harmless, to honour God, to be of use to his neighbour, and at the same time relieve and refresh his loving heart, Aloysius was indefatigable in conversing about God and spiritual things, and sanctified by this means himself and those around him.

Mortification and prayer, prayer and mortification — these two hinges on which our entire spiritual life turns, this compendium of all ascetism for beginners, for those more advanced, and for masters — were recognised by Aloysius in all their importance, practised with faithful constancy, and blessed by God with the most glorious graces of success, so that the youthful Saint is now a perfect model for all religious, who wish to order their lives in conformity with their holy vocation.

Aloysius performed no great exterior work in his Order; he did not occupy a pulpit or a professorial chair, he converted no nations, wrote no books, did not even administer the Sacrament of Penance; and yet he perfectly fulfilled the essential object of his own and all other Orders. Thereby he has become the consolation and model of all who cannot take part in the exterior work of their brethren, as they

would wish; they all may and should attain what Aloysius attained, and — become Saints.

To give to one's Order a Saint in one's own person, is the best thanks to God and to the Order. No one is so useful to them as a Saint, because no one knows God better, serves Him better, loves Him or glorifies Him more than a Saint. In the Saints He reveals His wisdom, fidelity, mercy, greatness, and power. A Saint is the perfect image of God. But a Saint renders the most important service to his Order also. A Saint is always a glorious proof that the Order to which he belonged is a Divine work and a noble, vigorous fruit of the Gospel. His merits, his intercession, and his brilliant example are a shield, a light, and a powerful encouragement to the whole Order, indeed to all religious and the whole Church.

Thus the Orders have in St. Aloysius a lofty and beautiful model. Regarded in this general way, he is a pattern to them all. How much good has been done to the Order by the simple account of his life! Awaited with longing desire, eagerly read — nay, almost devoured, and put into practice courageously and zealously, it has been to this day like a grain of seed springing up in the hearts of many noble youths and maidens, and ripening into a religious vocation; it excites and maintains in the souls of religious the love of their vocation, and matures in them fruits of holiness and salvation. In this way Aloysius has really become the recruiter of the holy army of religious. His example and intercession belong first of all to them. The first for whom he cared were his own brethren in religion; to all of them when dying he promised his intercession. Assuredly he can have nothing more at heart than to see God's chosen ones here below increase in numbers and merits, especially by becoming Saints. Every petition and all confidence in this respect may be sure of being granted.

8. Conclusion.

The whole life of St. Aloysius has passed once more before our eyes, and in conclusion we can easily sum it up in a few general features and review it again.

First, Aloysius is a Saint. The essence, the vital strength, the manifestations and the rewards of sanctity are most brilliantly revealed in his life.

The essence of holiness consists in the possession of sanctifying grace, which really bestows upon man supernatural life, supernatural goodness and sanctity, and makes him a child of God and an heir of heaven. Aloysius received this precious grace in his baptism, and valued it above everything; it was to him his real nobility, beauty, and riches. He guarded it most carefully, protecting it by flight from the world and strict custody of the senses, so that, according to the unanimous testimony of all his confessors, he never lost it, but preserved it intact in all its first beauty. Yet more, he traded like an industrious merchant with the pound entrusted to him by his Master, every day increasing and doubling it by unceasing prayer; by fervent reception of the Sacraments, which are really only instruments and means for the communication, preservation, and increase of sanctifying grace; and by the practice of all virtues and works of charity. He did this especially by his ardent devotion to the Holy Eucharist, which is so peculiarly the Sacrament of life and the supernatural nourishment of the soul.

Holiness consists, further, in the possession and practice of supernatural virtues. They are the auxiliaries in the manifestation of supernatural life, or rather they are themselves its exterior manifestation. As there can be no fire that does not give forth warmth, and no light that does not dispel darkness, neither can there be any true super-

natural life, any true love of God without living works of virtue. The Saints are nothing but the models of great, heroic virtue. What a marvellous wealth of virtues the life of St. Aloysius unfolds! The purest innocence, the strictest penance, the most decided contempt of the world, the most solid piety and humility, invincible fortitude, and the most heroic love of God and men! From the first dawn of reason Aloysius' life is virtue, nothing but virtue, and the most solid, sublime, and heroic virtue.

The rewards of holiness extend not only to the person of the Saints, but also to their influence upon others. Aloysius enjoys in the bosom of eternal happiness the contemplation of the Supreme Good, and in consequence of his innocence is numbered among the small but chosen band who, clothed in white garments and bearing palms in their hands, with the Name of the Father written upon their foreheads, follow the Lamb wherever He goes, as His nearest and most brilliant suite, and sing a song that no one else can sing. Nevertheless, whilst thus engaged in heaven, he excites by his great and numerous miracles here upon earth the astonishment and gratitude of the whole world; he enjoys a wide-spread veneration, and constantly does infinite good in the Church of God by his example and intercession. So true it is, that there is no canonised Saint who has not an immeasurable sphere of influence. "He that believeth in me", as the Scripture saith, "from him shall flow rivers of living water" (John vii. 38). And for this reason the Bull of Canonisation of St. Aloysius says that he has been placed among the number of holy confessors "to the glory of the Most Holy and Undivided Trinity, for the exaltation of the Catholic faith, and for the increase of the Christian name", since his holiness, his virtues and miracles have been proved authentic. Those

are great and holy interests; but the power of a Saint suffices for them all.

The holiness that we admire in Aloysius, and which the Church holds up as a model, is in reality simply the execution of the programme sketched by the Son of God in His Gospel, and realised in His Church in all ages, and particularly also in the 16th century. The Church could not possibly be at that time, as she was represented to be, degenerate, depraved and corrupt, since she produced at that very period a whole heaven of Saints — St. Philip Neri, Ignatius of Loyola, Francis Xavier, Francis Borgia, Thomas of Villanova, John of God, Francis of Sales Paschalis Baylon, Charles Borromeo, Pius V., Stanislaus Kostka, Aloysius Gonzaga, and so many, many others.

Secondly, Aloysius is a youthful and therefore a lovable Saint. It seems to be with holiness as with the flowers. It is said that flowers which bloom before the summer solstice have a more delicate appearance, a more graceful form, and a sweeter perfume than those that unfold in the heat of the sun. It is indisputable that the charm of youth casts its glamour over virtue and holiness, surrounding them with a tender radiance of grace and lovableness. Thus it is with the holiness of Aloysius. He is so young and yet so prudent, so young and so pure, so young and yet so courageous; is not that at once marvellous and charming?

A German proverb says: "Youth has no virtue"; or, as we say in England, "Young men must sow their wild oats". This does not apply to Aloysius; and herein lies a deep truth worthy of reflection. Cardinal Bellarmine is right when he says in his panegyric on Aloysius that it was surely God's intention to teach the world by his example that holiness is not the special privilege of any particular age, but that any and every age is ripe enough for virtue

and holiness. What nature cannot achieve, is accomplished by the light yet powerful touch of grace. And therefore Aloysius' life is a lesson to strive after virtue and holiness, not only to young people, but also to all who devote themselves to the education of the young. They must not despair of young people, but trust firmly in the grace of God and the wonderful strength and malleability of the human will, and seek to awaken, cultivate, and develop in childish hearts the quiet germs of virtue. "With God all things are possible" (Matt. xix. 26). How magnificently are revealed in Aloysius the glorious aims and rewards of Christian education, — nothing less than a Saint's throne in heaven and in the Church on earth! Aloysius' mother and several of his instructors had the rare happiness and truly heavenly joy of seeing their child and pupil raised to the altars during their own life-time!

Such a glorious consummation slumbers in the hearts of children. Of them, truly, is the kingdom of heaven. Are they not then worthy of all our care, trouble, and exertion? St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi concludes her vision of Aloysius' holiness and glory by saying that she knew how grateful he was to all who had helped him in his spiritual life while he lived on earth; and therefore she too would try to earn his gratitude by saving a soul[1]. Aloysius is the patron of youth. Will he not regard everything we do for his charges as though done to himself?

Thirdly, Aloysius is a princely Saint. It is certain that his noble birth and princely rank attracted the attention of the world to him and won people's hearts. That is only natural. Temporal possessions, high birth, and a crown enhance in the eyes of men the good qualities of those to whom they belong. The real reason is not that

[1] Bolland. 1038 B.

he is a rich man and a prince, but that he is a holy prince. That is what is admirable. Even Holy Scripture itself does not refuse its admiration to the holiness of rich men and princes. "Blessed is the rich man that is found without blemish; and that hath not gone after gold, nor put his trust in money nor in treasures. Who is he, and we will praise him? for he hath done wonderful things in his life. Who hath been tried thereby, and made perfect, he shall have glory everlasting. He that could have transgressed, and hath not transgressed; could do evil things, and hath not done them; therefore are his goods established in the Lord, and all the church of the saints shall declare his alms" (Ecclus. xxxi. 8—11). A princely Saint is doubly and trebly worthy of honour; first on account of the fortitude with which he stood firm against all the allurements of sin, for money is the means to every sin; secondly, on account of the lofty wisdom with which he weighed everything, temporal and eternal, earthly and heavenly blessings, in the right scales; thirdly, on account of the great blessing that his hand scattered broadcast, by renouncing and sacrificing things temporal for those of eternity. Before St. Benedict's eyes lay once unfolded, in a glorious vision, all the natural magnificence of the world, in the manifold orders and degrees of the material, the spiritual, and the human creation. It was a wondrous and enchanting picture; it seemed as though there could be nothing greater or more sublime. But we are told in a sentence as beautiful as it is brief: "*Inspexit et despexit*" (he regarded it and disregarded it). He saw it all, and did not think it worth looking at a second time, in comparison with one ray of the eternal and infinite nature, goodness, and beauty, on which he had gazed in God at the same moment. So, too, Aloysius despised the kingdom of the world and all earthly beauty, out of love for Him

in Whom he believed, Whom he had seen, and Whom he loved with his whole heart.

Fourthly, Aloysius is a saintly religious. A religious is always a lesson and a service to the age in which he lives. A religious makes a profession of striving after Christian perfection, and is occupied exclusively with this endeavour, by the observance of the perpetual vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Simply regarded as a religious, he is, therefore, a great example to the world, and a living witness that there are higher blessings for man than any earthly, sensual endeavours can procure him; namely, the blessings of the soul, virtue and holiness. But the Christian, the Catholic sees and honours in a true religious the living expression and impersonation of the perfection of his religion, the complete victory of her means of grace over the power of the passions and earthly impulses, the venerable image of the renunciation of his Divine Saviour; he sees in him, also, the authorized defender and propagator of his faith. A religious, and especially a holy religious, is always a great power in the world by the force of his example, his prayers, and his sacrifices. The sword of these prayers and sacrifices does not weigh less heavily in the scales of the destiny of the world than that of temporal potentates. Prayer and sacrifice christianised the world, and are always undermining evil and helping good to gain the victory here on earth. And it was just in the 16th century, when a thousand discoveries in the New World beyond the seas enticed and urged men on to the path of temporal gain; when the attack on the monasteries gave an unworthy freedom to carnal desire; and when the general apostasy from the Church brought revolt against all authority in its train; it was just in this century that holy religious were most urgently needed. That is why precisely at this time God raised

up such an extraordinary number of new Orders for all the various work of the Christian life. In the ranks of the holy militia of religion they took the place of those who had so dishonourably deserted; they stepped bravely into the breach made by the apostasy, banded together around the ancient Church, and joyfully fought the battles of the Lord; and their example attracted new recruits from all the classes of the Christian people, and even from the ranks of the highest Catholic nobility. Among the glorious names that at this time exchanged castle and Court for a religious house, and the rapier for the Cross, was that of Aloysius. Yes, he fought in the foremost ranks of the counter-reform; for he was a member of the Company of Jesus.

Aloysius is fifthly a holy Jesuit. One of the new forces that the Spirit of God raised up from the inexhaustible fulness of the Church's vitality, was the Society of Jesus. Opposed in the very last fibre of its composition to the spirit of revolt, apostasy and excess of that age, animated solely by the thought of serving with knightly fidelity and generosity Christ, its King, in His Bride and His Vicar on earth, and of taking part in His work of saving souls, according to His own principles; bound to no country, limited to no single kind of work, wielding the old weapons of the Apostolate in a new method of warfare; the Society was the chosen instrument employed by the Providence of God to undertake the external defence and propagation of the old faith, and to arouse and enkindle the lukewarm and indifferent.

This was the Order Aloysius joined. And what a boon has he been to the Order! It is true, he was not seen like Possevin, untiringly journeying backwards and forwards between Rome and worldly Courts, as mediator and chargé d'affaires; he did not wield the two-edged sword of con-

troversy like Bellarmine; he did not carry the light of faith to the darkness of unbelief and heathendom, like Francis Xavier; he did not offer to his mother the blood-stained palm of martyrdom, like Spinola, or the laurel wreath of Attic learning, like Maffei. No; Aloysius is a quiet, home-like, lovable ornament of the family home; he is the palm and the olive, whose blossoms adorn the fore-courts of God's house, and whose mysterious perfume, borne by the angels over the surrounding walls, has such a marvellous attraction for youthful hearts. What the Venerable Bede says of the Church: that she lacks none of the manifold adornments, neither the rose of the martyrs nor the lily of the virgins, is true also of the Society of Jesus. Each of its various ranks has its ornament; it is sublime in its martyrs and defenders of the faith, and lovable in Aloysius.

It is a remarkable fact in history that scarcely any other Order in the Catholic Church has had so many and such lasting persecutions to endure as the Society of Jesus, from the days of its foundation down to the present hour. But in it also is verified the promise of Our Lord: "Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake!" In the persecutions it endures, the Society of Jesus has the consolation of her children and Saints. They tell her that she is not as bad as the reputation she has in the world. Aloysius ardently loved the Society, and what he loved and esteemed so highly can surely not be bad and worthy of rejection. Eternal Wisdom has said that men do not gather grapes from thorns, nor figs from thistles; and just as little can it be assumed that the heavenly Gardener grafted the flower of His preference on a poisonous branch, and entrusted it to the care of an impure hand. Aloysius was certainly a Saint already while in the world; but still he must have learned and acquired something in the Order.

So at least thought the Roman Congregation which had to decide upon his virtues. In its approbation, addressed to Paul V., it says that Aloysius consecrated the bloom of his youth to the King of Kings in the Society of Jesus. The wise youth knew that in the Society he would lack neither faithful companions to encourage him by their example to run the way of the Lord with new energy, nor experienced guides to direct him through the dangers of life. He gladly looked up to those great men, Ignatius of Loyola, Francis Xavier, James Laynez, Francis Borgia, Peter Faber, Stanislaus Kostka, and so many others; he regarded, too, the many martyrs who, with the banner of the Catholic faith in their hands, courageously shed their blood for this faith, in England under the hands of the heretics, in Japan under the arrows of the heathen [1].

Lastly, Aloysius is not only an ornament and a consolation, but also a powerful help to the Society, inasmuch as he has become by his death in the spring-time of life the patron of Christian youth. One of the most important fields of the Society's energy and zealous care is precisely the education of youth. If she had to make her choice, she would say: "Give me the young people, and I will leave you all the rest." The Order of Mount Carmel and the families of St. Dominic and St. Francis have incorporated with themselves nearly all the Catholic world by means of the scapular, the holy rosary, and the Third Order; the Society of Jesus does the same by the Congregation of the Children of Mary and by St. Aloysius' patronage of Christian youth. Wherever Aloysius is venerated and invoked, there the Society of Jesus — known or unknown — is at work, because he belongs to her, and in him her principles find expression and effect.

---

[1] Bolland. 1121 E.

Most true are the words of Eternal Wisdom: "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they labour not, neither do they spin. But I say to you, that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these" (Matt. vi. 28 29). So is it with innocence, of which the lily is the symbol. Innocence needs no adornment, it is beauty itself; it needs no dowry, it is itself the highest wealth; it needs no miracles, it is itself the greatest miracle; it needs no weapons to conquer a kingdom, for it is the most beautiful, most peaceful, and most joyful kingdom in itself and in its dominion over the world, over heaven, and over the Heart of God Himself. "O how beautiful is the chaste generation with glory, for the memory thereof is immortal; because it is known both with God and with men. When it is present, they imitate it; and they desire it when it hath withdrawn itself, and it triumpheth crowned for ever, winning the reward of undefiled conflicts" (Wisd. iv. 1 2). How true all this has proved in Aloysius! How often already have heaven and earth exultingly cried out to him, and ever again exclaim: "Thou art the glory of Jerusalem, thou art the joy of Israel, thou art the honour of our people; for thou hast done manfully, and thy heart has been strengthened, because thou hast loved chastity. . . . Therefore also the hand of the Lord hath strengthened thee, and therefore thou shalt be blessed forever" (Judith xv. 10 11).

Omnia ad majorem Dei gloriam!

St. Aloysius, pray for us!

Chronology of the Life of St. Aloysius.

1568 March 9th. Birth and baptism of St. Aloysius, at the Castle of Castiglione.

1573 St. Aloysius, then nearly five years old, stays for several months at Casale Maggiore. While there he exposes his life to danger by firing a cannon. — At the beginning of June, he returns to Castiglione.

1576 The Saint, then eight years old, stays at Monferrato, where his father Don Ferrante had gone with his whole family, because of the threatened plague.

1577 June. Departure from Monferrato. Stays several months at the Bagni di Lucca. Towards the end of August, leaves for Florence.

1578 Residence in Florence. St. Aloysius, then ten years old, makes a vow of perpetual virginity before the picture of Our Lady of the Annunziata, in the Church of the same name. — Pays a passing visit to his father at the Bagni di Lucca.

1579 Residence in Florence. In September, pays another visit to his father at the Bagni di Lucca. On Nov. 10th, leaves Florence for Mantua, where the Saint, then eleven years old, resolves to embrace the religious state and give up the Marquisate to his brother Rudolph.

1580 Between June 18th and June 20th, goes to Castiglione. There the gifts of prayer and of tears are bestowed upon St. Aloysius.

June 22nd. He receives his First Communion, at the age of twelve years, from the hands of St. Charles Borromeo.

Nov. Goes to Casale Monferrato; is nearly drowned on the way.

1581 Residence at Casale Monferrato. St. Aloysius, then thirteen years of age, takes the resolution to enter the priesthood.

May. He returns to Castiglione, where his life is endangered by fire.

September. He sets out for Italy to meet the Empress at Trent. Sept. 26th, Padua, Vicenza; Sept. 30th, Verona, Brescia, Lodi; Oct. 8th, Pavia; Oct. 12th, Novi; Oct. 16th, arrives at Genoa; Nov. 8th, leaves Genoa for Marseilles; Dec. 12th, lands at Collioura.

1582 Jan. 6th, Barcelona; Feb. 5th, Saragossa. Feb. 10th, he leaves for Madrid; March 6th, arrives at Madrid; Nov. 21, death of Don Diego, Infante of Spain, to whom St. Aloysius had been page of honour.

1583 August 15th. He is called to the Society of Jesus.

1584 In the early part of this year St. Aloysius returns to Italy. July, arrives at Castiglione. Visit to the princes of Northern Italy. Departure for Milan.

1585 July. St. Aloysius leaves Milan and goes to Mantua to make the Spiritual Exercises, and then returns to Castiglione.

Nov. 2nd. He renounces his right to the Marquisate.

Nov. 4th. He sets out for Rome.

Nov. 25th. He enters the Noviciate of Sant' Andrea, Rome.

1586 He makes his first year's noviciate at Sant' Andrea.

Feb. 13th. Death of his father.

Towards the end of October he goes to Naples.

1587 May 8th. St. Aloysius leaves Naples for Rome. He completes his course of philosophy at the Roman College.

Nov. He begins his studies in theology.

Nov. 25th. He takes his first vows.

1588 Feb. 28th. He is ordained Ostiarius; March 6th, Lector; March 13th, Exorcist; March 20th, Acolyte.

1589 St. Aloysius continues his studies in theology at the Roman College.

Sept. He goes to Mantua and Castiglione to settle the dispute between the Duke of Mantua and his own brother Rudolph.

Nov. 28th. He returns to Milan and continues his studies in theology, with but one short interruption.

1590 St. Aloysius makes a passing visit to Mantua and Castiglione.

March 12th. He returns to Milan. Has a revelation of his approaching death.

May. He returns to Rome and resumes his theology.

1591 St. Aloysius nurses the sick in the Hospitals of S. Sisto and Santa Maria della Consolazione. He takes the infection.

June 20th. His holy death.

1600 April 4th. St. Aloysius appears to St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi. This and a miracle on April 8th, in the convent where St. Mary Magdalen was living, causes his cultus to spread rapidly through Northern Italy and Rome.

1604 May 12th. The Synod of Mantua petitions the Pope for the canonisation of the Saint.

June 21th. The town of Brescia, with the permission of the Bishop, celebrates the feast of the Servant of God for the first time.

July 28th. The picture of St. Aloysius is for the first time exposed for public veneration in the Church of Castiglione.

1605 May 13th. The remains of St. Aloysius are solemnly translated from the Chapel of St. Sebastian to that of the Madonna, in the Church of the Annunziata of the Roman College.

May 21st. By permission of Paul V., the picture of the Servant of God is openly exposed to veneration in the Church of the Annunziata at Rome.

Sept. 21th. In the Consistory Aloysius is pronounced Blessed, *vivae vocis oraculo*.

Oct. 19th. The Brief appears in which the Pope confirms the title of Blessed.

1618 March 26th. Paul V. grants that the feast of B. Aloysius be held on the 21st of June, and that the Mass of the day be said in his honour, throughout all the States of the Gonzagas. This permission is soon afterwards extended to the houses of the Society of Jesus in Rome.

1621 Oct. 2nd. This permission is extended to the whole Society of Jesus. All priests saying Mass in the Churches of the Order are likewise allowed to say this Mass.

1725 June 21st. Pope Benedict XIII. gives St. Aloysius to the schools of the Society of Jesus as special Patron.

1726 Dec. 10th. The decree of Canonisation of St. Aloysius is signed by Benedict XIII.

Dec. 31st. The Canonisation is celebrated at St. Peter's.

1729 Nov. 22nd. St. Aloysius is declared special Patron of all students throughout the entire Catholic world.

Martyrs and Confessors of the English College, Rome, who attended lectures at the Roman College when St. Aloysius was there (1587—1591).

Ven. Edward Oldcorne, S. J., martyred at Worcester, 1606.
Math. Kellison D. D., President of the English College, Douai, 1613—1641.
William Baldwin, S. J., Confessor.
Ven. John Roberts, O. S. B., martyred at Tyburn, 1610.
Richard Blount, S. J., First Provincial S. J. in England.
Ven. Christopher Buxton, martyred at Canterbury, 1588.
Ven. Edmund Duke, martyred at Durham, 1590.
William Flack, S. J.
Ven. John Ingram, martyred at Newcastle-on-Tyne, 1594.
Ven. Eustace White, S. J., martyred at Tyburn, 1591.
John Gerard, S. J., Confessor (entered the Society at Sant' Andrea, Rome, with Fr. Oldcorne, Aug. 15th 1588).
Ven. Edward Thwing, martyred at Lancaster, 1600.
Richard Banks, Confessor.
Ven. Thomas Tichborne, martyred at Tyburn, 1602.
George Smith, Confessor.
Edward Coffin, S. J., Confessor.
Ven. Joseph Lampton, martyred at Newcastle-on-Tyne, 1593.
John Percy, S. J., Controversialist.
John Yate, S. J., Confessor.
Michael and Edward Walpole, S. J.
Ven. John Thules, martyred at Lancaster, 1616.
John Sidgreaves, Carthusian.
John Floyd, S. J., Controversialist.

INDEX.

Abundius and Abundantius SS. 122.
Acquaviva Claud, General of the Society of Jesus 94—96 104 107 108 116 120—123 127 158 190 220 238 247 259.
Addo, river 264.
Alagona Peter, S. J. 224.
Albert, Archduke of Belgium 281.
Albertinelli John 18.
Alcala 67 69.
Alexander VII., Pope 283.
— Farnese see Farnese.
Alexius St. 229.
Alfonso, King of Spain 302.
Aliprandi Helena 202 204 205 209 215 263 265.
— John Anthony 202 209.
Ambrose St. 179.
Andrea Sant', church in Mantua 37.
— Sant', Jesuit Noviciate in Rome 123 128 129 130 138 147 158 238.
Andrea del Sarto see Sarto.
Angeli, Via degli, in Florence 25.
Angelis Mutius de, S. J. 164 231 249.
Angelo John 193.
Angels, Holy 153—155.
Anne Mary of Austria 6 65 69.
Annunziata, church and picture in Florence 28 32 34 268 f.
— church in Rome 128 258 261 269 280.
Apennines 223.
Aquinas St. Thomas 166—168 180 229 290.
Ara Cœli 138.
Armada, Spanish 126.
Ascoli 269.
Augustine St. 152 179 226 227 230 251.
Austria Anne Mary of, see Anne Mary.
— Archdukes of (Rudolph and Ernest) 6 64 (Ferdinand) 190 192.
— Eleanor of, Duchess of Mantua, see Eleanor.
— Joan of, see Joan.
— Don Juan of 14.
Aventine Hill 229.
Azor Juan, S. J. 165.

Bacci Flaminius 269.
Bacher Don Placid 271.
Bajae 159.
Baldinucci Philip 25.
Barbara St., church in Mantua 282.
Barnabites 51.
Baronis Philibert 268 289.
Baronius Cæsar, Cardinal 274.
Bede Venerable 327.
Bellarini James, valet of St. Aloysius 117 123.
Bellarmine Robert, Cardinal 20 189 191 241 248 249 254 256 259 274—276 290 322 327.
Benedict St. 324.
— XIII., Pope 24 283 285 297 299 300.

Benedict XIV., Pope 71.
Benevento, Archbishop of (Prince Orsini, afterwards Benedict XIII.) 283.
Benizi St. Philip 32.
Berchmans St. John 260 292.
Bernard St. 146 147 152 224 225 230 242 251.
Bernini 128.
Bologna 118.
Bonaventura St. 179.
Bondi Tiberius, S. J. 240.
Bono Dr. Giovanni B. 117 123.
Borgia St. Francis 128.
Borlasco James, S. J. 192 195 198.
Borromeo Camilla 44.
— St. Charles 13 22 33 44 46 47 66 91 98 152 199 213 282.
— Frederick 88 270.
Bozzoli, House of 3 33 83 96 308.
Brazil 127.
Brera, Jesuit College at Milan 98 105 204 217.
Brescia 3 44 66 194 196 214 278 279 281 301.
Bresciani Julius 18 25.
Bruno Vincent, S. J. 153 163 249.

Cagliari Benedetto 290.
Cairo Francis de 47.
Camerota Giovanni, S. J. 160.
Campagna 187.
Campo di Fiore 187.
Campoli 269.
Canisius B. Peter, S. J. 43.
Capello Biancha 193.
Capitol, the 241.
Capuchins 78 91.
Carlinis Catherine de 268 278.
Carmel, Mount, Order of 328.
Carmelite Convent at Florence 268 277.
Carminata John Baptist, S. J. 242 254.
Carthusians 91.
Casale Maggiore (C. di Monferrato) 15 30 48 49 291.
Castel Goffredo 8 9 14 91 189 198 205 263.
Castiglione (delle Stiviere) 3 7 18 20 41 55 87 105 112 133 194—198 202 204 209 243 263 270 279 281 285 290 293 305 308.
Cataneo Luigi, chaplain 115 117 123 133.
Catherine St., V. M. 111 123 124 163 180.
— of Sienna St. 179 224 230.
— Infanta, Duchess of Savoy 6 68.
Celestini Nicholas, S. J. 267.
Celso, Madonna di S., at Milan 100.
Celsus and Nazarius SS., Church of 4 9 44 205 244 279.
Cepari Virgil, S. J. 223 268 270 275 278.
Charles V., Emperor 2 65 73.
— VI., Emperor 284.
— VIII., King of France 2.
— Emanuel, Duke of Savoy 88 111.
Chieri 5 88 90 285.
Chisolfa, La 99.
Christian, King of Denmark 43.
Christina, Duchess of Lorraine 43 222.
Clara Eugenie (Isabel), Archduchess of Belgium, daughter of Philip II. of Spain 6 68 86 281.
Clement VIII., Pope 278—280.
— X., Pope 283.
— XI., Pope 283 285.
Cœline Hill 269.
Cologne 261 302.
Colonna Countess Julia 3 159.
— Vespasian 159.
Corbinelli Louis, S. J. 247.

Corso Francis, S. J. 259.
Cortes of Spain, the 73.
Coton Peter, S. J. 216.
Crea, chapel of Our Lady of 51.
Cremona 281.
Cusa, Cardinal di 187.
Cuticio Dr. 222.

Della Porta see Porta.
Della Rovere see Rovere.
Del Sarto see Sarto.
Del Te, palace in Mantua 100.
Del Turco see Turco.
Dertona (Tortona) 43 222.
De Villars see Villars.
Didacus St. 67.
Diego, son of Philip II. of Spain, see James.
Dietrichstein, Cardinal 258 280.
Dimas, mathematician 69.
Dominic, Order of St. 328.
Doria John Andrew, Admiral 67 86.

Eleanor of Austria, Duchess of Mantua 96 104 109 190 193 274.
— Gonzaga, Empress of Germany 282.
— de Medici see Medici.
Elizabeth Christina, Empress of Austria 284.
— Queen of England 12.
— Duchess of Urbino 3.
— de Valois see Isabel.
Elphinstone George 158.
Eric II. of Brunswick 43.
Escurial 74.
Espez y Mendoza Don Diego de 86.
Este Alphonsus d', Duke of Ferrara 88 118.
— Isabella d' 37.
— Louis d', Cardinal 121.
— Margaret d', Duchess of Ferrara, see Gonzaga.
Exercises, Daily 19 32.
— Spiritual, of St. Ignatius 105 130 185 267.

Fabrini Nicholas, S. J. 240 253 to 255.
Farnese Alexander 88 121 128.
— Ranuccio II., Duke of Parma 88 281.
Fedele San, church at Milan 46 100.
Ferdinand II., Emperor 263 282 306.
— Gonzaga, Marquis, see Gonzaga.
Ferrara 2 50 88 118 193 308. Cf. Este.
Ferrari Camilla 10 265.
Fiesole 24 285.
Finizio Giovanni 272.
Fiore Campo di 187.
— Santa Maria del, Cathedral at Florence 36.
Flack William, S. J. 266.
Florence 22—25 30 32 35 118 152 193 270 285 293 299.
Fondi 159.
Fontanella 24.
Fornovo, battle of 2.
Frances of Rome St. 282.
Francis of Assisi St. 179; Order of St. Francis 328.
— Xavier St. 276 327.
— Marquis of Castiglione, see Gonzaga.
Franciscans 4 20 92.
Frascati 188 189.
Fuccioli Marius, S. J. 231 252.

Gaëta 159.
Gagliardi Achilles, S. J. 102 218.
Gambaredolo 263.
Garda, Lago di 1 4 41.
Gaudiello Raffaelle 271.
Genoa 67 86 87.

Gesù, the, church at Rome 120, 122 128 143 185 260.
— vecchio, church at Naples 271 f.
Ghislieri Alessandrino 121.
Ghizoni Clement 25 265 281.
Giaparelli 271.
Giovannino San, church 32.
Girona 285.
Giulio Romano, painter 37 308.
Giunio Anthony, S. J. 194.
Giustiniani Augustine, S. J. 165 166.
— Benedict, S. J. 165.
— John 266.
Goletta 14 21.
Gonzaga Alfonso, Lord of Castel Goffredo 8 9 14 91 189 198 200 205 207 209 263.
— Aloysius, passim.
— Barbara, Duchess of Mantua 3.
— Catherine, daughter of the Lord of Castel Goffredo 9 205 263.
— Charles, brother of St. Aloysius 18.
— Christian, brother of St. Aloysius 18 66.
— Claud (di Borgoforte) 265.
— Cynthia 263 264 305.
— Diego, brother of St. Aloysius 18.
— Eleanor, Empress of Germany 282.
— Eleanor, Duchess of Mantua 29 105.
— Fabius 199 202 222.
— Ferdinand, Marquis of Castiglione, father of St. Aloysius 4 5 7 14 16 21 22 37 47—49 55 65 67 72 81—87 91—94 96 98 100—116 121 132 133 135 137 195 289.
— Ferdinand, brother of St. Aloysius 18.
— Francis, Marquis of Castiglione, brother of St. Aloysius 21 66 106 107 114 190 195 260 264 265 279—281.
Gonzaga Francis, Marquis of Mantua 2.
— Frederick, first Duke of Mantua 2 37 100.
— Gridonia 263 305.
— Hannibal (in religion Fr. Francis O. S. F., afterwards Bishop of Mantua) 83—87 133 278 281.
— Hercules, Cardinal 3 104 222.
— Horace, Lord of Solferino 9 14 189.
— Isabella, sister of St. Aloysius 18 66 68 86 195.
— Joan 264.
— John Francis, first Marquis of Mantua 2.
— Lewis 2 33.
— Margaret (d'Este), Duchess of Ferrara 88 118 281 308.
— Martha, Marchioness of Castiglione, mother of St. Aloysius 4—8 9 11 13 41 47—49 65 81 106 111 133 134 163 190 191 194—197 199 202—204 209 221 231—236 239 243 249 263 274 279.
— Olympia 263 305.
— Prosper 8 38 113 114 199.
— Rudolph, Marquis of Castiglione, brother of St. Aloysius 18 22 31 37 47 66 69 81 84 87 89 96 101 105—107 114 117 123 135 190 193—196 200—209 211—215 220—222 231—233 236 239 243 263 265 279 305 311.
— Scipio, Cardinal 83 94 108 120 122 123 161 164 222 245 274.
— Vincent, Cardinal 91 108 138 245.
— Vincent, Duke of Mantua 37 105 113—115 190 196 198 to 201 203 207 209 232 265 281.

Gonzaga William, Duke of Mantua 8 37 91 104 108 115 193.
Gonzaga-Guastalla, Cæsar 44.
Gonzaga-Nevers, House of 282.
— — Charles I., Duke of Mantua 283.
Gonzalez Thyrsus, S. J. 261.
Good Counsel, Our Lady of, picture at Madrid 80.
Gregorian University 128.
Gregory XIII., Pope 13 44 104 128.
— XIV., Pope 13 238 253.
— XV., Pope 282.
— of Nazianzum St. 179.
Guastalla-Molfetta, House of 3 91 308.
Guelfucci Anthony, S. J. 230 251 254 257.
Guises, the 126.
Gussoni Mark, S. J. 266.

Hareddin, pirate 159.
Henry VIII., King of England 5.
— III., King of France 126.
— IV., King of France 126 216.
— King and Cardinal of Portugal 65 70.
Hohenzollern Barbara of 3.
Humiliati, Order of the 98.

Ignatius St. 78 120 127 162 261 276 291.
— Church of St. 128 261 266 285 288 302—304.
Indies, missions to the 79 127.
— letters from the 43.
Isabel (Clara Eugenie), daughter of Philip II. of Spain, see Clara Eugenie.
— of Valois, Queen of Spain 6 68.
Isabella Gonzaga, Duchess of Mantua 3.

James (Diego), Crown Prince of Spain 6 69 71 74 311.
Januarius St. 163 271.
Japan, mission work in 43 79.
Japanese Ambassadors to Rome 104.
— Martyrs 162 328.
Jerome St. 179.
Jesuit Colleges:
Bologna 193.
Brescia 196 214.
Brussels 259.
Castiglione 260.
Cologne 261.
Florence 30 32.
Loretto 118.
Madrid 76 80 84.
Mantua 113 198.
Milan (the Brera) 98 105 204 217.
Naples 160.
Novellara (Noviciate) 89 94.
Palermo 261 266.
Rome, see Roman College, Gregorian University.
Sienna 192 224.
Jesus, Society of 70 75 79 80 126 129—131 164 238 286 297 305 326—328.
Joan of Austria 23 26.
Julius II., Pope 5.

Knights of the Most Holy Redeemer 37.
Kostka Paul 292.
— Stanislaus St., see Stanislaus.

La Chisolfa 99.
Lady, Our, see Good Counsel, Pillar.
Lambertini John, S. J. 253.
Lancelotti Octavius, Marquis 286.
Lancisius Nicholas, S. J. 259.
Lateran, the 125.
Lauro Vincent, Cardinal 164.
La Valetta see Monaco La Valetta.
Le Gros, sculptor 286.
Leo XIII., Pope 302.

Lepanto 14.
Lewis III. (Gonzaga), Marquis of Mantua 3.
Loarte Caspar, S. J. 34.
Loretto, the Holy House of 7 118 119.
Lorraine Christina of 43 222.
— Dorothy of 43.
— Duke Francis of 43.
— Duke and Duchess of 282.
Louis of Granada Ven. 75.
Lucca, baths of 22 23 25.
Ludovisi Louis, Cardinal 128 261.
Ludwig the Bavarian 2.
Lugo, Cardinal 261.

Madonna di San Celso, at Milan 100.
— della Strada 185.
Madrid 6 21 67 70 73 76 80 82 85 195 285 299.
Maffei 327.
Malavolta Prosper, S. J. 198.
Mancinelli, S. J. 231.
Mancini Thomas 274.
Mantegna Andrea, painter 37 308.
Mantua 3 12 22 37 88 112 117 133 193 198 278 281 285 293 308.
— Marchioness of (Barbara) 3.
— Duchess of (Eleanor of Austria) 96 104 109 190 193 274.
— Duchess of (Eleanor de Medici) 29 105.
— Duke Charles of 283.
— Duke Frederick of 2 37 100.
— Duke Vincent of, see Gonzaga Vincent.
— Duke William of, see Gonzaga William.
Maria, Infanta of Spain 6 281.
Maria Santa, monastery of 4 20 92 279.
— della Consolazione Santa 241.
— del Fiore Santa 36.
Mario, Monte 120 228.
Marmirolo 199.
Marseilles 67.
Martha, Donna, mother of St. Aloysius, see Gonzaga.
Martino San 195.
Martyrs, English 328.
— Japanese 162 328.
Mary of Austria, Empress 65 67 73.
— Magdalen de Pazzi St. 32 268 277 292 323.
— de Medici, afterwards Queen of France 23 29 282.
— of Portugal 6 70.
— Stuart 126.
Mary St., Franciscan Convent of, at Castiglione 4 20 92 279.
— St., Carmelite Convent of, at Florence 268 277.
— Major St., church at Rome 125.
Mastrilli Gregory, S. J. 162 223.
Mayence 302.
Medici Alexander de 122.
— Bernardine de, S. J. 192 216 223.
— Eleanor de, Duchess of Mantua 29 105.
— Ferdinand de, Cardinal, afterwards Grand Duke of Tuscany 121 193 281.
— Francis de, Grand Duke of Tuscany 22 24 33 118 123 193.
— John de 27 29 239.
— Mary de, afterwards Queen of France 23 29 282.
Mendoza see Espez.
Milan 2 7 12 13 22 37 54 96—98 133 204 208 211 216 299.
Mizetti, S. J. 252.
Modena 281.
— Duke of 281.
Monaco La Valetta, Cardinal 303.
Monferrato, Casale di, see Casale.
— Marquisate of 22 37.
Montanara, Piazza 187.

Montserrat 67.
Munich 302.

Naples 158—163 271 285.
Nazarius and Celsus SS., Church of, at Castiglione 4 9 44 205.
Nevers see Gonzaga.
Nickel Goswin, S. J. 261.
Nobilis Julia de 268.
Novellara, Jesuit Noviciate 89 94.
Novellara-Sabionetta, House of 3 308.

Omura 162.
Orders, religious 77—79. See Barnabites, Carmel, Carthusians, Dominic, Francis, Jesus (Society of).
Orsini, Princes of 258 283.

Padua 281.
Paglia, river 228.
Panigarolo Francis, O. S. F. 92.
Parma 88 270 281.
Parocchi, Cardinal 303.
Pastorio John, Archpriest of Castiglione 9 44 92 205 206 221.
Paterno Ferdinand, S. J. 76 80 81.
Paul St. 171.
— V., Pope 278 280—282 328.
Pavia 88.
Pazzi see Mary Magdalen.
Pernstein Maximilian 258.
Perpignan, fortress of 5.
Persia Hannibal 114.
Pescatore John Baptist, S. J. 123 158 159 231 249.
Peter St. 171.
Peter's St., at Rome 120 125 228 284.
Petrocini, Dr. Sallust 84.
Petroni, Count 238.
Philip II. of Spain 5—7 12 14 64 65 67 70 72—74 160 308.
— III. of Spain 69 75.
Philippines, mission to the 267.
Piacenza 211.
Piatti Jerome, S. J. 143 147 172 252.
Pillar, Our Lady of the 67.
Pitti, Palace 27.
Pius V., Pope 13.
Porta della, architect 128..
Possevin 326.
Prague 190 195.
Pruinet Jean 158.

Quirinal 128.

Rampolla, Cardinal 303.
Ranuccio II. Farnese see Farnese.
Recalcati Bartholomew, S. J. 249.
Reggio Charles, S. J. 100.
Retz Francis, S. J. 266.
Rome 94 120 125 128 129 220 284 287 288 302.
Roman College 70 108 128 163 188 220 223 230 238 260 275 280 288 290 297.
Romano see Giulio.
Rossi 9.
Rossignoli Bernardine, S. J. 220 229 242 245 252—254 259 274.
Rovere Anna della 5.
— House of 5.
— Jerome della, afterwards Cardinal 88 147 164 176 192 203 235 245 274.
Rudolph II., Emperor 96 97 100 113 190 208 281.
— Archduke of Austria 6 64 190 192.
— Gonzaga see Gonzaga.

Salombrini Augustine, S. J. 216.
Saragossa 67 86.
Sarto Andrea del 32.
Sasso, church of 260 264 270.
Savoy, Duke of 281.
Sebastian St., church at Castiglione 4.

Sebastian St., Chapel of, in Church of Annunziata (Rome) 260 262 280.
— St., Church and Palace of, at Mantua 112 114.
Secondo, Count Troilus di S. 203.
Senario, Monte 36.
Sforza, Duke Francis 43.
Sienna 92 224 228.
— St. Catherine of, see Catherine.
Sigismund, Emperor 2.
Six Sundays, devotion of 266 267 287 301.
Sixtus IV., Pope 5.
— V., Pope 13 104 122 125 126 161 229 238.
Sixtus St., Hospital of 240 241.
Solferino, Castle of 9 190 191 201. Cf. Gonzaga Horace.
Sosiego 68.
Spinelli Aloysius, S. J. 266.
Spinola B. Charles 162 327.
— Ottavio 279.
Stanislaus St. 129 284 292.
Stefano Rotondo Santo 288.
Strada, Madonna della 185.
Stuart Mary 126.

Tacitus 299.
Tamburini Michael, S. J. 283.
Tana Balthasar 5.
— Hercules, of Chieri 88 90.
— House of 5.
Te del see Del Te.
Terzi Lorenzo, S. J., Rector of the College at Brescia 196 214.
Third Order of St. Francis 328.
Thomas Aquinas St., see Aquinas.
Torre Francis de la, S. J. 30.
Tortona (Dertona) 43 222.
Trent, Council of 7 13; Catechism of the Council of T. 44 45.
Trivultio, Cardinal 263.
— Prince Theodore 263.
Tunis, expedition against 14 17 21.
Turco James del 24.
— Peter Francis del 17 18 24 25 28 31 55 65 107 117.
Turin 88 89 111 268.
Tuscany Grand Duke of, see Medici (Ferdinand, Francis).
— Grand Duchess of 23 26 28.

Ugolotti Sylvester, O. Pr. 279.
University, Gregorian 128.
Urban VII., Pope 233 238.
— VIII., Pope 263 282.
Urbino, Lords of 5.
— Elizabeth Duchess of 3.

Valentino Anthony, S. J. 105.
Valle Paul, S. J. 164.
Vallombrosa 36.
Valois Isabel of, see Isabel.
Valtellina 260 264 270.
Vasquez Gabriel, S. J. 70 165.
Vatican 125.
Velletri 158.
Verduro Jerome 221.
Verona 22.
Veronese Paul 290.
Vienna 284 302.
Vigevano 49.
Vignola 128.
Villars de, Commander 309.
Virgins of Jesus 133 305.
Vitelleschi Mutius, S. J. 19 168 187 282.

Wales Princes of 313.

Zucchi Dr. 172.

060.97
G 589
6881
MESCHLER, MAURICE
AUTHOR
The Life of St Aloysius G.
TITLE
DATE LOANED | BORROWER'S NAME | ROOM NUMBER

6881